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REDEMPTION
IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

REDEMPTION

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE SET IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Among the religions of the world Christianity claims to stand pre-eminent as the Religion of Redemption. It will be our task to explain this conception, and to vindicate its essential truth by relating it to the context of living Christian experience.

While the problem involved is of high speculative moment, it is equally important for the practical religious life. We have been accustomed to draw a sharp dividing-line between speculative and practical problems, and often shut our eyes to their necessary relation in the sphere of religion. Thus we are inclined to dissociate the fact or reality of salvation from the theory or explanation of it; and when confused by warring theories we often comfort ourselves with the thought that fact and theory are two things, and that the one may be realized apart from the other. Just as we can exercise our power of vision without any knowledge of the visional process, so we can exercise our religious faculty without reflecting on the implications of our faith. We may be redeemed unto God though we have no clear conception of the conditions and processes of redemption, and we may assimilate the Spirit of Christ without possessing any theory of His person. That is so far true. Yet the distinction between fact and theory, between experience and metaphysics, is by no means so radical as it seems.

It is a commonplace in philosophy that our simplest experiences of fact are mediated by thought processes. Our present sense-perceptions are based on unconscious

interpretations which are rooted in past experiences. And so our practical religious intuitions are mediated by interpretations which have their roots in past activities of faith and thought. There is no such thing as bare fact or unmediated intuition; and, on the other hand, what we call theory is just the conscious expansion of a process which is already involved in what we call plain fact. In every fact a theory lies dormant. And further, in times of transition, the dormant processes tend to force themselves into consciousness and to demand a more explicit statement. If there are times when the expression of religious experience may safely be left to the guidance of the intuitions and the prompting of instinctive faith, there are also times like the present when embarrassed thought calls for a new scrutiny of the faith-content. That such embarrassment exists, even as to the most vital facts of the Christian faith, one may be allowed to assume. It is enough to point to the bewildering contrariety of doctrine and to the widely prevalent theology of compromise which contents itself with vague generalities. The practical religious man is confused by such feeble guidance. He may be willing to set aside traditions which have lost their power of appeal to his reason and conscience; but he cannot be satisfied with vague phrases, or the hasty and conflicting constructions that are offered to him in the name of modern thought. There is urgent call for a theory that shall be based on a broader investigation of the sources of faith, and on a fair and frank criticism of the theologies of the past. It is with part of this wide problem that we have to deal.

We may approach our subject by starting from the wider conception of Religion, which may be defined briefly as communion with God. Following this guiding concept one will naturally define Redemption as the restoration of man's communion with God, and the various means employed to that end.

Such a definition assumes that there is a distinction between the ordinary religious life of fellowship and those practices which have to do with the restoration

of a lost communion. One may even make a threefold division of religious ideas and rites, and discriminate between such as are referable to initiation into the Divine fellowship, such as concern its regular maintenance, and such as aim at its restoration or recovery. But such dividing-lines are logical rather than actual; for, in many instances, it is impossible to separate initiatory rites from observances whose object is the maintenance of communion, while the latter are found largely to coincide with restorative and remedial rites. Take for example the rite of sacrifice, which covers the whole field of religious life. It is at once a rite of approach to the Deity, forming part of the initiatory ceremonies: it is a regular mode of worship: and it is also used as a means of propitiating the favour of an offended heaven. It does not follow, however, that the implied distinctions are useless. They guide us in the selection of facts, calling attention to those special and outstanding means of winning Heaven's favour, appropriate to men who have lost the assurance of it. At the same time we must keep in mind that religious conceptions are fluent, so that modes of worship which express the regular ways of intercourse with the Divine powers may also have value and may acquire new meaning within what may be called the redemptive sphere.

Our first task, then, will be to study the systematic processes by which harmony with God has been sought, and particularly those restorative methods which have been adopted when men feel themselves estranged from the heavenly powers and seek to regain their favour. Such a delimitation of the scope of inquiry leaves us free to study the various ideals that mark the different levels of religious thought.

In the more primitive religions—the religions of Nature—the discord from which man seeks deliverance is not referable to any specifically moral ideal, but rather to the natural sense of insecurity felt in the presence of nature's threatening power. When things go well, the higher powers are regarded as favourable; while natural evils are referred to their disfavour, and extra-

ordinary misfortunes to their wrath. The restoration of Divine favour is thus identified with release from natural evil.

In the moral religions, again, the dominant thought is that of wrongdoing or sin, and the redemptive problem is transformed into the question: How shall man attain to moral harmony with heaven and moral peace with himself? How shall he be just before God?

This remains henceforward the radical problem of religion; but it acquires a deeper meaning and reaches after a profounder solution in what are called the religions of Redemption. In the legal moral religions the problem is still superficially considered; for little distinction is yet made between the conditions of salvation and the general conditions of the moral life. Fear God and keep His commandments, is a sufficient summary for the religious life. Return to the path of obedience and make up for the sins of the past by renewed moral discipline. Render to God His due of worship and submission and to your fellow-men their due of justice and mercy, and thus you will secure peace with God. Such conceptions mark a great advance on the attitude of nature-religion; but they only give rise to new questions. How to transform the life from injustice to justice: how the moral manhood is to be redeemed into harmony with the ideal: this problem is not yet seriously realized. The depths of the spiritual life have not been fathomed, because the infinitude of the Divine requirement has not yet destroyed the sense of a self-sufficient righteousness. It is only in the religions of Redemption that serious emphasis is laid on the difficulty of moral renovation and on the need of new redemptive forces.

These distinctions will become apparent as we proceed. Enough has been said to indicate the nature of the inquiry and the methods of procedure. We shall survey in order the three great groups of religions—the Natural or Objective, the Moral or Subjective, and the higher Spiritual or Redemptive—and inquire what each of them has taught and presented as the special means of securing peace with heaven. We shall find that in the two earlier

stages of religion, where the deeper aspects of the problem are unrealized, the truth of redemption is only foreshadowed in rites and conceptions whose full significance comes to view in Redemptive religion.

(A) Historical Survey

"In a word, the achievements of the Saviour, resulting from His incarnation, are of such a kind and number that anyone seeking to enumerate them may be compared to one who gazes at the expanse of the sea and tries to count the waves. For just as one, viewing the waves and trying to count them, finds his sense of vision baffled by the ever-advancing billows; so one who would grasp all the achievements of Christ in the flesh, finds it impossible even by way of enumeration to comprehend them in their entirety, seeing that those things which go beyond his thought exceed in number those he thinks to have comprehended."—Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi.*

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIONS OF NATURE

RELIGION appears to be a universal feature of man's life; and its origin goes back to the very beginnings of human history. Primitive man is a worshipper, and early worship is of the simplest kind. Intellectually, it is based on the instinctive recognition of nature's kinship which causes him to interpret the forces around him in naïve anthropomorphic fashion. The world around him is alive: within or behind the movements and events of nature he recognizes the activity of spiritual beings, and his view of the most ordinary things is charged with interpretations drawn from this animistic or spiritist faith. And this animist belief takes on a religious aspect when he tries to link himself more closely with some of the more powerful and more gracious of these unseen powers.

Why does he seek to relate himself to these powers? Because he wishes to conciliate their favour and to share in their mysterious power. From the psychological point of view his religious awakening springs from his consciousness of need. And the need that impels him Godward is largely of a material kind, because the ends he seeks are mostly, if not altogether, material. Hunger and thirst, exposure to the elements, exposure to his enemies—such are the foes against which he wages a conscious and lifelong conflict. By his own energy and labour, and with the help of such primitive science as he can acquire, he can drive back the evils of life with varying success, but never with complete success. His powers are limited, while his aspirations for himself, or

his family or tribe, are unlimited. His fortune in and war, in sowing and reaping, depends largel ditions he cannot control. How is he to secu against the innumerable adverse forces, unless b an alliance with the more potent supernatural

The usages and conceptions of early religior hile sufficiently uniform to fall into more or less definite groups, are also sufficiently varied to defy at present any radical unification; and indeed the recent history of comparative religion is strewn with the wrecks of over-hasty generalization. Even scientific writers have been tempted by an excessive striving after simplicity either to reduce all religious practices to a single group—whether practices of the tomb, or of sex, or of totemism—or to take obviously contemporaneous phenomena and treat them as successive strata of development. Thus Frazer's theory, that men were first awakened to religion by the failure of magic, is so plainly inconsistent with fact that only a great scientist could be guilty of holding it. Even Robertson Smith's view that honorific sacrifice arose in consequence of the failure to comprehend the earlier totemistic sacramental rite seems to involve the derivation of a very simple and elementary form of worship from one that implies a certain degree of development. Of course we are entitled to assume that the simplicity of primitive life will also appear in religious faith and practice; but there is no such thing as absolute uniformity, and room must be allowed for divergent lines of development from the very start.

Without attempting to follow the development in detail, we may be content to examine the three quite distinguishable strata of religious practices. The first are Honorific practices, in which the worshipper presents something of his own to the spirit or god: the second are Mystic-sacramental practices, in which the god is conceived as communicating his divine power to the worshipper; and the third are Cathartic practices, which subserve the negative end of cleansing and the expulsion of the evil spirits.

The first stratum of facts, which may be gathered

ne head of Honorific practices, needs little illus- The principle is universally prevalent that the ed nourishment and are pleased with gifts and Like men, they may be persuaded by earnest a and blandishments, by gifts of food or other offer , by tactful consideration of their likes and dislikes. To do homage to the tree-spirit the primitive savage will bring an offering—perhaps of food—and tie it to the branches, or lay it at the foot of the sacred tree. Or he may ornament the tree with some trophy that he values, at the same time adjuring the spirit to prosper him in his enterprise. If he is propitiating the water-spirit of some lake or well, he will cast his offering into the water. From such simple gifts to the more stately tribal and national sacrifices of corn, oil, wine, or animal burnt-offerings presented on the altar, there are many intervening stages of evolution, but no intrinsic difference so far as meaning and motive are concerned.

Besides the general intention of honouring and pleasing the god, there may be various motives prompting the offerings. They may be simple offerings of reverence and friendliness: they may be gifts to persuade the gods to give in return: or they may be propitiatory, to avert the god's displeasure or appease his wrath. Such motives find expression in the accompanying prayer. The forms of prayer are such as are thought best fitted to propitiate the god. They are usually appeals in which the power and greatness of the god are magnified, and in which the worshipper expresses his devoutness and submission, or expresses his grief at having given offence, it may be unwittingly. The gods are usually invoked as possessing high moral qualities. However capricious and selfish in mythological representation, they are depicted in prayer as wise, just and beneficent. If justice has failed, the reason is found not in any defect of will on the part of the god, but simply in his ignorance of facts, which are now presented to him in naïve fashion by the worshipper. In general, also, the petitioner presents himself before his god in the most favourable light, as one who has

always adored the divinity and offered him fitting and regular sacrifice. Or, if the past has little to recommend the worshipper, he may pledge his future conduct and behaviour on condition that his request be granted.

How would primitive man know that his prayers were heard, his sacrifices accepted, and the favour of the gods secured? Precisely in the same way as the Divine disfavour was first revealed, in the natural sequence of events. Just as any prevailing distress, as defeat in war or the failure of his harvest, were interpreted as the unfailing sign of the ill-will of the gods, so success and returning plenty would be taken as proof that his prayers were accepted and their favour restored. The problems which arise with fuller observation of nature's working, and from higher conceptions of Divine wisdom and righteousness, had not yet dawned on the horizon of thought.

But such honorific forms of worship do not exhaust the ways in which primitive man sought to relate himself to the spiritual world. A second group of facts reveal themselves, which are apparently no less primitive, and which belong to the Sacramental and Mystic order. What was more natural than that the worshipper, when he ate the fruit of the sacred tree, or chewed its leaves, should believe that he was coming into closer union with the tree-spirit; or that when he hung a bit of his clothing on its branches, he was uniting himself personally with the supernatural influence? Or when he drank the water of the sacred well, or river, he was recipient of the spirit's vivifying power? And similarly, in regions where totemism prevailed, the eating of the sacred animal of the tribe would naturally be felt to consolidate the union of the tribe with their god, as well as the union of the members of the tribe with each other. And in the later worships of national polytheism the same mystic conception reveals itself in the more developed sacrificial customs. The sacrifice is not merely the food of the gods in the sense of a hospitable entertainment offered by the worshippers; it is also the Divine food of which the worshippers partake, and by the eating of it they incorporate

something of the divinity. In some cases the mystic idea stands out with special prominence: it dominates the entire worship of ancient Mexico, and in the mystery-rites of the Hellenistic world it is the essential feature. In all such cases the victim is most holy, the visible representative of the god; and in partaking of the divine repast the worshippers felt themselves to be one with their god, and exalted to the divine level. In the Dionysiac rites the sacred animal of the god was torn in pieces and devoured by the worshippers: in the worship of Demeter a pig—sacred to the goddess—was sacramentally eaten: in other instances sacred cakes were used for a similar purpose. In the Mexican ritual, images of the god were made of dough, and were devoured by the multitude. Traces of similar conceptions may be found almost everywhere. In the great majority of instances, however, the sacramental conception is found united with the honorific; and in such cases the sacrifice takes the form of a common banquet in which special portions of the victim are offered to the deity and the rest is eaten as sacred food by the worshippers.

It may be noted here that, equally in sacramental and in honorific rites, special sacredness was attached to the blood of the victim, and that blood-sacrifices were usually regarded as more efficacious than bloodless offerings. This special regard for the blood was due to the natural physiological notion that the blood of the animal was identical with its soul or essence. Thus when two individuals of different tribes wished to join in alliance, they cemented the bond by scratching their arms and pressing them together so that the blood commingled. Tribal alliances were often ratified in the same way. The mingling of blood ensured the mingling of lives and personalities: the two parties were now one, through the blood-covenant. Similar conceptions gathered round the sacrificial ritual. The blood was the essential part, and was usually made over to the god by being poured out on the altar, or dashed against the altar's sides. In early sacramental sacrifices the blood was drunk by the worshippers: later it was merely sprinkled upon

them; in either case the blood was the medium through which the divine life was conveyed to the participants. The most striking illustration of this conception in later heathendom is the Taurobolium rite of the Mithra-worship, where the proselyte, placed in a trench below, receives in his person the blood of the victim, and is thus "re-born to life eternal."[1]

The third great series of facts may be grouped under the name of Cathartic practices. They form the obverse side of the sacrificial customs already mentioned, and are frequently united with them. As these had in view the securing of blessing, so the various forms of cathartic practice had in view the removal of the curse. For most evils were regarded as the working of evil spirits; and the endeavour to exorcise them led to a great variety of remarkable practices. Threatening gestures; smoking-out; rubbing, anointing, washing, thrashing or other maltreatment—such were the common remedies employed. The primitive savages would frighten off the demons by shouting, beating the air, stamping on the ground, or dancing about with holy fire. In the later ritual, ceremonial washing, rubbing or anointing, combined with exorcist spells, are in universal favour. Thus in the Vendidad, the ritual portion of the Persian Avesta, a lengthy form of purification is imposed on one who has been defiled by touching a dead body. First, the demon is properly chastened by exorcist spells; then the body of the afflicted is treated with washing and other ceremonies. Finally the priest sprinkles the sacred "gomez" successively on specified points of the head, the shoulders, chest and back, and down to the feet. With each sprinkling the demon is driven from point to point, as he tries to escape from the sacred ointment; and at length, being finally driven from his last refuge in the left toe, he flies away cursing to the regions of the north. And still more active methods were sometimes employed. If the evil spirit had entered by means of food, an emetic might be used to expel both the food and the demon; and again, the maltreatment of the possessed person might make

[1] Cp. Dill, *Roman Society*, pp. 82, 83.

the demon's location unhealthy and lead to his withdrawal. Thus "the Delaware Indians had two sovereign remedies for sin: the one was an emetic, the other a thrashing. In the latter case the remedy was administered by means of twelve different sticks, with which the sinner was belaboured from the soles of his feet up to his neck. In both cases the sins were supposed to be expelled from the body and to pass out through the throat."[1] In other cases it was the custom to apply stinging ants to the body of the victim, or to slash him with knives and then put pepper in the flesh wounds; the intention of course being not to injure the man, but to benefit him by expelling the demon.

But more ingenious and complicated methods were also devised. For it was not enough to expel the evil spirit: something must further be done to ensure that he will not immediately return. Once the curse is out, means must be adopted to secure that it stays out. This was done by a transference-ritual: by driving the evil spirit from the patient into some other medium, so that it might be permanently disposed of. Employing the thought of imitative magic, the exorcist would catch the demon as it retired from the afflicted person: he would tie it up in a cloth or a basket, or transfer it to a stone, a bird, or some other animal, and then put both medium and demon out of harm's way. The cloth might be buried in a hollow tree: the stone would be thrown away: the bird would be released and fly away, while the animal scapegoat would be carried to a safe distance, and either set loose in the wilderness or thrown down a precipice. The customs vary indefinitely; but the meaning is the same. In Sumatra a curse was ceremonially removed by setting free a swallow with the prayer that the bird might receive the curse, and fly away with it. In ancient Babylonian ritual a pig played the part of scapegoat. So in the Levitical law of Israel the leper was ritually cleansed by letting a bird fly away with the leprosy, and the curse of sin was removed by transferring the guilt to a scapegoat, which was there-

[1] Cp. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, iii. 131.

after driven into the wilderness. It is to be noted that the scapegoat substitute was never offered to the god in sacrifice; it was simply driven away from the midst of the community that the curse might be removed.[1]

The three conceptions which have been illustrated —the honorific, the sacramental, and the cathartic— seem to form the basis of nature-religion, and enable us to interpret the immense variety of heathen practices. It is to be added that the three strands of thought are often intertwined or fused in one complex ritual. A striking illustration of mechanical union is presented in the old Egyptian ritual, as described by Herodotus.[2] The priests kill the bullock selected for sacrifice and cut off its head. They then use the head for a special cathartic purpose. They pronounce over it the following imprecation: "If any evil threatens the worshippers or the Egyptian people, may it be averted on this head"; and then they proceed to get rid of the curse-laden head, either throwing it into the Nile or selling it to Greek traders. They then fill the body of the bullock with fine meats and sweet-smelling spices, and offer it as a burnt-sacrifice to their god; while the worshippers "make a banquet of what remains of the victim." Here we have a union of the honorific and sacramental ritual in the burnt-offering to the deity and the sacred banquet, while in the treatment of the bullock's head we see the addition of the cathartic ritual. In the great majority of instances the outstanding conception is the honorific, while the sacramental and cathartic factors are supplementary. One typical instance may serve—the first sacrifice described in Homer's "Iliad." Agamemnon, the leader of the Greeks, has insulted Chryses, an aged priest of

[1] Such customs are practically universal and prevail in every age. Even to-day in Japan "a man or woman who wishes to be purified procures from the temple a small piece of white paper cut rudely in the shape of a shirt. On this he writes his name, sex, the year and month of his birth. He rubs the paper over his whole body, and breathes into it, thus transferring to it his sins or ailments; and then brings it back to the temple, where the collection is deposited on a black table during the purification ceremony, and at the end is sent off in a boat and thrown into the water.—Moore, *History of Religion*, p. 107.

[2] ii. 40.

Apollo, by taking his daughter captive, and refusing to accept the ransom offered for her. He and his people thus incur the wrath of Apollo, and a plague, brought on by the darts of the angry god, rages for days in the Greek camp. When informed by their seer of the cause of the pestilence, the Greeks hasten to propitiate the offended deity. They take away the cause of offence by restoring the maiden without ransom to her father. Further, in view of the past offence, they purify themselves by ceremonial washing; and they cast into the sea the water in which they have made their ablutions—thus cleansing themselves of the evil of the offence. And finally they sacrifice to Apollo choice hecatombs of bulls and goats, the sweet odour of which ascends to heaven; while at the same time all the Greeks take part in the sacrificial feast, eating and drinking and chanting beautiful pæans in honour of the god. Thus atonement is made: the far-darting Apollo is appeased, and the pestilence is stayed. Here the honorific, sacramental and cathartic elements are fused together; and the fusion may be regarded as typical of heathen ritual.

We have still to notice the wide prevalence of human sacrifice. It took its start doubtless in an age of cannibalism, but continued long after human flesh ceased to be used as common food. It needs no special interpretation, but simply exemplifies and confirms the three conceptions already considered.

In early times the human victim, like the animal, was offered as food to the gods; and when the food-conception waned, the human life, like the animal, was still presented as a worthy and acceptable offering. The only difference was that the human victim represented the costlier gift. Again, as we have already seen, the food of the gods was also regarded as divine food for men; and human victims, like animal, were eaten sacramentally. By the very fact of his being dedicated to the gods, the human victim was himself regarded as sacrosanct and divine; and the worshippers who took part in the sacrifice and the accompanying banquet of human flesh felt themselves to be partaking of divine food.

In the cruel rites of ancient Mexico, the sacramental ritual was specially predominant. The human victim was often selected a year beforehand, and was clothed and anointed as the representative of the god. The people adored him, feted him, gave him all manner of privileges, and finally when he was offered in sacrifice they ate part of his sacred flesh. In other cases they flayed the human victim and clothed themselves with the skin, or preserved it as a powerful talisman. In such cases, as Réville says, " we find the notion that the victim devoted to a deity, and therefore dedicated to pass into his substance and to become by assimilation an integral part of him, is already co-substantial with him, has already become part of him ; so that the worshipper in his turn, by himself assimilating a part of the victim's flesh, unites himself in substance with the divine being."[1]

In other cases where the partaking of human flesh had ceased to be tolerable, even in ritual worship, the sacramental conception would naturally decline, and the honorific idea would recover prominence. There can be little doubt that the exceptional human sacrifices of later times belong to this honorific class. When the Hebrew Jephthah, returning from a victorious campaign, offered his daughter in sacrifice, his offering was understood as a tribute of gratitude for his success. And similarly when the Greek fleet, setting out on their campaign against Troy, were delayed by contrary winds, and the Princess Iphigenia was sacrificed to propitiate the favour of the gods, it is very probable that the propitiation had the aspect of a costly gift—the costliest the king could offer.[2]

[1] *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 89.

[2] Robertson Smith, in his article on Sacrifice (*Encyc. Britt.*) treats the sacrifice of Iphigenia as a piaculum, in the sense of a satisfaction to justice, atoning for the guilt of the community. Later, however (*Religion of the Semites*), he rightly abandons this explanation as unhistorical, and treats it as exemplifying the sacramental conception. He now classes it among other cases where at the opening of a campaign a human victim is sacrificed—not to assuage the god's wrath, but to consecrate the warriors. He argues that this consecration would naturally take the form of sacramental communion, and confirms this by noting that among the Arabians at the opening of a

The human victim also played an important part in exorcist and cathartic rites. Instead of being transferred to an animal, the curse of evil was frequently transferred to a human scapegoat. Here the essential form of the ritual remains the same; the human victim is laden with the evils, plagues or sins of the community, and is then driven from their midst. It was not necessary to put the victim to death. Just as the animal victim was seldom killed, but was banished from the midst of the community, so the human victim was hunted from society; he was pelted with sticks or stones, or otherwise ignominiously expelled. The life of the human scapegoat was often endangered, but seldom sacrificed. The examples adduced by Frazer of the killing of the scapegoat are either very ill-attested or mere matter of inference; but we hear of one case, among the Asiatic Greeks of the sixth century B.C., where the human scapegoat was burnt on a pyre and his ashes thereafter cast into the sea.[1] In any case the death of the victim was not an essential feature of the meaning of the ritual.

We have to notice finally the continual modifications that took place in the primitive ritual. The conservative principle which is said to govern religious custom has never secured absolute fixity of custom. The most noticeable change is that seen in the amelioration of the more crude and cruel practices; and here the conservative instinct is satisfied with the retention of the essential form, while permitting almost any degree of material substitution. Thus human sacrifice is gradually abandoned, while retained in form. If the worshipper is averse to eating human flesh, the imitation of eating will serve; or if human sacrifice is repugnant, an image or an animal may be substituted. As Robertson Smith says, "the tendency was to modify the horrors of human

campaign human victims were slain, and the blood applied to the tents of the warriors. It is hardly safe to dogmatize; but one may suggest that the sacrifice initiating a campaign might have originally taken the form of a sacrament, and have later degenerated, and become simply the offering of a precious and costly tribute.

[1] Cp. Frazer's chapter on the Scapegoat, where numerous instances are cited, both of early and of later times.

sacrifice, either by accepting an effusion of blood, e.g., in the flagellation of the Spartan lads at the altar of Artemis, or by a further extension of the doctrine of substitution. The Romans, for example, substituted puppets for men, and cast rush dolls into the Tiber at the annual atoning sacrifice. Usually, however, the life of an animal was accepted by the god in place of a human life, as among the Greeks, Romans, Phœnicians and Egyptians. Among the last, the Egyptians, the victim was marked with a seal bearing the image of a man bound and kneeling, with a sword at his throat."[1] If we ask how the religious mind could accept such substitution and make-believe, we find a partial explanation in the accepted principle of imitative magic, viz., that like produces like; from which the conclusion may be drawn that similar sacrificial offerings will be equally efficacious. The religious man is far more controlled by the power of association than by that of rational connection; and thus he could offer to his deity with a fairly good conscience, not merely an equivalent substitute, but anything that fairly resembled the original offering. It is questionable, however, whether the more intelligent minds were quite so naïve as to be hoodwinked. Certain it is that in specially solemn observances the older ritual is more tenaciously adhered to, and that among many communities which have adopted humane sacrificial forms, there is often a recrudescence of the more primitive and cruel worship. On occasions of calamity or sore stress, when the need of propitiation or Divine help is more intensely felt, all substitutions and mitigations of the old ritual are often set aside, and the more potent, if more cruel, institution is reinstated. Thus in times of misfortune the fires of Moloch demand costlier victims; in the day of his defeat Mesha, king of Moab, takes his eldest son and offers him for a burnt-offering on

[1] Cp. article on Sacrifice in *Encyc. Britt.* Such artificial substitutions are sometimes used to support the theory of the substitutionary significance of sacrifice. Such cases, however, only show that in point of fact animals were sometimes substituted for men; they do not warrant the conclusion that all animal sacrifices were substitutions of this kind, and still less do they justify the position that substitution enters into the formal meaning of sacrifice. *See* note in Appendix.

the wall of his beleaguered town,[1] and apparently some of the kings of Israel followed the same bad example when they caused their children to pass through the fire. And when we find nations which have largely turned to humaner customs still retaining human sacrifice in their rarer and more solemn convocations: as when the Carthaginians annually re-dedicated their altar with a tribesman's blood, or when the ancient Celts of Cæsar's day offered an annual holocaust of human victims, as believing that "nothing but the life of man can atone for the life of man, and not otherwise can the immortal divinities be appeased," we see how deep-rooted was the faith that on serious occasions no imitative substitutes were permissible, and that the assurance of Divine favour depended on the cost and the dignity of the offering.

It cannot be said, however, that the means taken to restore the worshippers to the Divine favour, or to make sure of it in solemn or critical times, differ in any essential respect from the more ordinary ritual. More solemnity and exactitude, and an aversion to ritual innovation, as well as a desire to increase the magnitude and quality of the offerings—these may mark the seriousness and solemnity of the situation, and the worshippers' anxiety for the help or renewed favour of the gods; but they do not give rise to new modes of approach to them. And, indeed, so long as the moral life remains in the unreflective stage, and the gods are conceived as nature-powers, as capricious beings liable to be offended because they have not received their due of homage, or for reasons unknown, the problem of moral redemption can scarcely be said to have arisen. With the awakening of conscious morality and a new conception of the gods as upholders of moral order, there emerges the second great stage—that of moral or reflective religion.

[1] 2 Kings iii. 27.

CHAPTER II

THE MORAL RELIGIONS

From Nature Religion, which teaches a doctrine of Redemption by Sacrifice, we pass to the higher stage of Moral Religion, which claims that obedience is better than sacrifice, and that the pathway to redemption must be found along the lines of personal moral endeavour.

We may note at the outset that the distinction between natural and moral religion must not be too rigorously applied. Indeed, it may be questioned whether there is any natural religion which does not contain anticipations of the moral element, or any moral religion which does not show considerable traces of the religion of nature from which it sprang. The real differentiation between the two stages is to be sought in this, that in ethical religions the moral element is the vitalizing and predominant factor, whereas in nature-religion that element has only a subordinate place. Thus the early Greek nature-worship is not wanting in conceptions of moral government; and conversely there are moral religions which are hard to discriminate from natural, seeing that the lower elements in them hold a very conspicuous place.

Passing such transitional forms, we shall fix attention on such religions as are quite definitely moulded by moral reflection and by ethical conceptions of the deity—the religions of Mazdaism, Judaism and Islam. The god here worshipped is distinctly a god of righteousness: the rewarder of the good, the punisher of the evil, both in time and eternity. The older capricious deities have vanished, and their place is taken by one God whose law is a law of right, and whose will is identified with the

moral order. The primitive conception of a uniform fate in the life of the hereafter has also disappeared; it is replaced by the conception of a definite award in heaven or hell, dealt out to men according to their moral deserts. And since the will of heaven is revealed to the discerning in the moral order of providence, there is no further need of soothsayer or mysterious oracle; but prophets stand forth to proclaim truth to their fellow-men with all the ardour of moral conviction.

Such moral religions have always assumed at first a more or less conspicuously nomistic form: they are religions of Law, as revealed by a Divine law-giver, and rewards and punishments are attached to obedience and disobedience. This is not only in accordance with ethical development, which always passes through a stage of law, external law, with accompanying sanctions; but it may be further explained by the principle of historic continuity. In the religions of nature plague, defeat, or other external calamity, is due to the ill-will of the gods, while long life and prosperity are due to their favour. In moral religion the same thought continues to prevail, with this addition, that since the Divine ill-will or favour depends on the moral conduct of the worshippers, all adversity is interpreted as the sign and the punishment of iniquity, and prosperity as the reward of righteousness. Thus emerges the nomistic conception of the moral order. Further, the moral conception of God as supreme governor and judge sets him above the likes and dislikes of men, above all accidents of age and country; and thus there is apt to be ascribed to him a moral transcendence which exalts him far above his worshippers. Religion takes on a nomistic aspect. Right and pious conduct is such as accords with the law of a transcendent Divine will; and its reward in well-being comes to be regarded by the pious man as the sign and seal, if not the final end, of his well-doing. The typical nomistic attitude is seen in the man who by obedience to the revealed law of right seeks to maintain or regain the favour of God, and thus to secure the rewards of righteousness in this world or the next.

It must be admitted, however, that in all the so-called nomistic religions this salient type of piety is supplemented by other features, of which some have been retained from the earlier and lower stage of religion, and others come into view as premonitions of a higher faith. This is true of Mazdaism and of Islam, but most evidently so in the religion of Israel.

One of the purest moral religions is the Mazdean faith, as preserved in the earlier portions of the Persian Avesta. Here the moral point of view predominates; Ahura is pre-eminently the god of righteousness, and man is called to work out his destiny by his own moral achievement. To accept Mazdaism is to take one's stand for righteousness and the light against the power of evil and darkness. The distinction between good and evil is rigorously applied, little room being left for the recognition of actual shading of character. The good are the children of light, and belong to the family of the all-wise and righteous Ahura; while the wicked are out and out the children of darkness and belong from the beginning to the evil spirit. And according as they take their stand will their eternal destiny be determined. Those who choose evil and set their lives in opposition to heaven's law will be plunged at last into endless destruction; while he who fights in the army of light, proving himself a son of light by thinking good thoughts, uttering good words, and performing good deeds, will enjoy the blessing of Ahura, and at death will safely cross the bridge that leads to the land of uncreated Light.

Such legal-moral conceptions, however, do not exhaust the teaching of the Avesta, even in its earlier and purer portions. Though based on a reformation of mere nature-religion, the Mazdean faith does not absolutely break with it; and rites which are logically extraneous to the higher faith continue to be valued and practised. The old ritual of prayer, sacrifice and ceremonial purification is combined more or less harmoniously with the new nomistic faith. It is retained all the more easily that it can be interpreted symbolically even when its efficacious virtue is denied. But—what is more important for our

inquiry—the legal view is also supplemented by the hope of a final and definite overthrow of the powers of evil. From a strictly nomistic standpoint human history is an endless conflict between good and evil, and a providential government is satisfied when it secures the correspondence between righteousness and felicity, as between wrong-doing and punishment. It is enough if the moral order is maintained so that righteousness is rewarded and evil punished. But there are indications, even in the Mazdean creed, of the higher religious faith that evil is not conquered till those who have been enslaved to it are released from its power. This higher ideal of a radical social transformation is foreshadowed in the Persian's "Messianic hope." Mingling with the thought of the world's history as a never-decided conflict between good and evil, there rise into growing clearness anticipations of a new era ushered in by Ahura and his servants, when all evil will be abolished and the good will be finally triumphant. It is something more than the thought of a moral order that inspires the Persian's faith when he points in the distant future to the coming of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The same type of religion is seen in the teaching, many centuries later, of Mahomet. Allah, the all-wise and gracious God, is supremely a god of righteousness. Man must work out his salvation by turning from his evil ways and doing the deeds of righteousness, and the final outcome of his choice and his doing is either heaven or hell. To fear Allah, and obey his righteous law, and contend for truth, honesty and justice—that is the way of life and Paradise. To do unrighteousness, to serve idols whose worship means moral degradation, is to court death and hell. It is true an equal emphasis is laid on faith—faith in Allah and faith in Mahomet as his prophet. But in the purer teaching of the Koran as distinguished from the later more artificial faith of Islam, the value attached to the acceptance of Mahomet is measured by the obedience it is fitted to produce. Faith in Allah and his prophet was radically faith in righteousness; it was, for Mahomet at least, the only attitude in which righteous-

ness could flourish. It was not meritorious in itself, but only the means of securing a clear-sighted and steadfast obedience to the supreme righteous Law.

This nomistic teaching of Islam, however, is supplemented by other elements both of a grosser and also of a higher stage. As is well-known, the religious life of Islam contains many practices which were either directly derived from Arabian customs or were a modification of these and belonging to the same level of piety. The Meccan pilgrimage and ceremonies, the fasts and festivals and regulated prayers of Islam—those elements which Kuenen adduces as disposing of Islam's claim to be a universal religion—these represent the luxuriant undergrowth of nature-religion surviving under the shadow of a more advanced faith. On the other hand, there are other elements which reach out beyond a merely nomistic attitude. As in the Mazdean religion, so here: the moral individualistic outlook, which contents itself with the prospect of an unending conflict between good and evil, with paradise and hell dividing the triumph between them, is felt to be insufficient. The triumph of righteousness involves more, even for the worshippers of Allah, than the realizing of a moral order which metes out appropriate rewards and penalties to human conduct. The reforming zeal of Islam, from its first attempts to conquer the world down to the last fanatical movement of Mahdism, was not due merely to the selfish love of conquest or hatred of the infidel. It was also animated by the yearning for a completer social redemption in which evil would be definitely overcome, and was often accompanied by the faith that Allah would intervene, through one of his representatives, for human redemption. There are thus elements in the Islamic faith which quite transcend the legal-moral and individualistic view-point, and look forward to the coming of a Kingdom of God in which new motive-forces will be employed for the redemption of humanity.

The best-known example of the nomistic faith is found in the religion of Israel. We find here again a certain fusion of principles. The moral standpoint is found combined with many Semitic customs and ideas which

have little in common with it; and, on the other hand, from the eighth century onwards one finds emerging new conceptions of the Divine purpose and new hopes of future redemption which far transcend the nomistic point of view. In view of this higher development in the prophetic faith, one might be disinclined to classify Judaism among the religions of law, and prefer to regard it as marking the transition from nomistic to redemptive religion. But in truth all the main stages of religious development find their principles embodied in this religion; and we classify it as belonging to the second or nomistic stage simply because of its prevailing character. In what follows we shall deal first with the natural basis of Israel's religious development; then with the prophetic religion in which the characteristic note is an enthusiasm for righteousness, but in which the nomistic view of the moral order is combined with redemptive hopes; and finally with the triumph of the nomistic view in later Judaism.

(*a*) While the religion of Israel was essentially the outcome of prophetic inspiration, it found its natural basis and starting-point in the common Semitic faith and even in the practices of all primitive peoples. The law of Moses was not absolutely new. Side by side with the moral requirements, it incorporated much that was already customary in the practice of Israel, and was parallel to the practices of other Semitic people. This is true of the central practice of Israel's religion—the sacrificial ritual, which is only beginning to be set in its proper background of historical fact.

Previous to the centralization of worship in the temple of Jerusalem, the ritual of Israel was of a simpler and more festive character, as well as more closely related to the life of the people. In general the conceptions of sacrifice which belong to the stage of nature-religion continued to prevail. Sacrifices were gifts to the god, who smelled the sweet savour and assimilated the essence of the offering. But they were also repasts of which the god invited his worshippers to partake: communion feasts in which the worshippers not only gave but received divine nourish-

ment and blessing. In short, the honorific and sacramental ideas are united.

One of the earliest pictures of sacrifice is that offered by Samuel on the occasion of Saul's first interview with the seer. The sacrifice was offered on the high place, and was accompanied by a sacred feast in which the people took part. The indications given show the presence of the sacramental conception; the sacrifice was, at least in part, a sacred banquet in which Jehovah held communion with his people, and fed them with heavenly bread. The same profound thought reappears in the treatment of sacrifice as the sealing of a Divine covenant. At the covenant-sacrifice at Mount Sinai the people partook of sacred food and were also sprinkled with sacred blood. "Moses rose up early in the morning and built an altar under the mount . . . and he sent young men who offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen to Jehovah. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that Jehovah hath said will we do and obey. Then Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you."[1] When it is added that "they saw God and did eat and drink," it is clearly intimated that there was a sacred banquet in which the nobles or the people took part. The conception of Jehovah as the covenant-God of Israel dominates the entire system of Hebrew thought, and it finds harmonious and fitting expression in the deeper conception of sacrifice as the sealing of communion, the confirming of the covenant-relation between God and His people.

But while this idea of a covenant-relation continued in religious thought, its direct connection with the sacrificial ritual was often relaxed, and the shallower interpretation occupied the foreground. The communion-idea was often quite displaced by the more superficial view that sacrifice was an honorific offering to Jehovah to main-

[1] Exod. xxiv. 4–11.

tain or propitiate his favour. For the ordinary Israelite the sacrifice was frequently nothing more than a tribute presented to God through the officiating priest, a gift presented with the compliments of the giver and expressive of good-will, homage, gratitude or penitence. Essentially it was the same kind of offering as Jacob presented when he advanced to meet his estranged brother Esau, and sent droves of cattle before him as a gift to his brother, saying, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept me."[1] On the whole, this attitude represents the prevailing point of view throughout antiquity. The gods are persuaded by gifts: such was the popular view of sacrifice throughout the kingly period of Israel's history. It was because it embodied this shallower conception that the whole sacrificial system was condemned by the prophet for its moral worthlessness; while the Psalmist calmly scoffed at the idea of making a bargain with God by sacrifice. "If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the world is mine and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? . . . I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds; for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."[2]

In the later elaboration of Israel's ritual service the same underlying principles are present. Every community as it advances in civilization and national unity tends to centralize its worship, to enlarge its ritual and to differentiate its sacrifices into various kinds. Thus—to go no further than the Phœnicians—the people of Tyre had a systematized and ordered ritual, and offered sacrifices of various kinds, burnt-offerings, thank-offerings and expiatory offerings. The details were regulated according to the variety of motives that actuated the worshippers, whether homage, gratitude, communion or penitence. A few points, however, may be noticed as indicating the general trend of Israel's ritualism. Most of the sacrifices—the burnt-offering, meat-offering and

[1] Gen. xxxii. 13–20. [2] Psalm l.

guilt-offering—belong to the honorific order of sacrifice. The thank-offering has also traces of the sacramental element, in so far as the people partook of the flesh of the sacrifice. The sin-offering, too, had something of a sacramental character, though the sacred blood was not actually sprinkled on the worshippers. The introduction of a special sin-offering has led Wellhausen and others to conclude that the later ritual expressed a deeper sense of sin, and was thus in contrast to the early worship, which was of a more joyous and festive character. But it should be observed that the sin-offering was not designed for grave moral offences, but rather for unwitting breaches of ritual law. The special feature of this sacrifice, that the remaining flesh was " burnt in a clean place without the camp," has been variously interpreted. The natural interpretation would seem to be that it belongs to the cathartic order of ritual, symbolizing the removal of the sin from the midst of the community. On the other hand, Robertson Smith regards this as a relic of the older custom which prevailed before the burnt-offering was part of the ritual, and which required that the portions of the sacred flesh not used up in the sacrifice should be safely and reverently disposed of. The point is an obscure one; but if it was an older custom and retained even when it became unnecessary, might its retention not be due to the fact that it suggested a cathartic meaning?

But the great cathartic ceremony of Israel was that which took place on the annual Day of Atonement, when altar, temple and people were " atoned," i.e., cleansed from impurity and sin. The most distinctive part of the day's service was the offering of the two goats. These were presented before Jehovah, and by the casting of lots, one goat was dedicated to Jehovah, the other to Azazel. The goat for Jehovah was offered as a sin-offering, while that for Azazel was preserved alive. As the law runs: Aaron (the high priest) " shall kill the goat of the sin-offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat . . . and shall make atonement for the holy place; because of

the uncleanness of the children of Israel and their transgressions and sins . . . and he shall go out to the altar that is before Jehovah, and make atonement for it . . . and he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." Then the live goat is to be presented. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, . . . and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away into the wilderness; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness."[1]

The obvious purpose of all these ceremonies was the cleansing or reconsecration of tabernacle and altar and people. Apart from the special solemnity attached to the service by the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy-seat within the veil, the most noticeable variation of ritual lay in the treatment of the live goat. The people are to be cleansed from their sins. The priest accordingly transfers their sins to the live goat by laying his hands on the animal's head and making confession on their behalf; and then the goat is driven from the camp, bearing away the people's iniquity. Here we have a beautiful piece of cathartic symbolism—symbolism for us, though no doubt it was literally regarded by many of Israel's worshippers. Such realistic symbolism is paralleled by the ritual used in the cleansing of the leper, where the live bird is supposed to fly away with the contagion; or by the Egyptian ritual described by Herodotus, where the priest transfers the curse of evil to the head of the bullock, and then gets rid of the head by throwing it into the Nile.[2]

[1] Lev. xvi. 15–22.

[2] This cathartic rite is sometimes used to justify the traditional view of sacrifice as a substitution of the victim for the worshippers. Thus it is argued that, just as the high priest in this case symbolizes by the laying on of hands the transference of the sins of the people, so when the worshipper in presenting his burnt-offering, peace-offering or sin-offering lays his hand on the victim's head, a similar transference of sin is indicated. Thus the conclusion has been reached that all

It appears, then, that the sacrifices of Israel with all their varied meaning are simply an elaboration of practices which belong to the stage of nature-worship, and reveal the same honorific and physical-mystical ideas. Generally regarded, they were a tribute to Jehovah to secure the continuance of his favour; but they involved also conceptions of communion, consecration, sacramental assimilation or mystic cleansing. The ritual culminates in the service of the Day of Atonement, which had a distinctively cathartic or purificatory significance; its special purpose was to purge away uncleanness from sanctuary and people.

(*b*) We have next to consider the characteristic element of Israel's religion, as seen in the moral teaching of the prophets. Here we shall find that, while the standpoint

sacrifice implies the transference of sin to the victim, and the substitution of the animal for the offerer. But the argument is rather superficial and forced, and the conclusion is certainly erroneous. The scapegoat ritual has a distinct meaning of its own. By having the sins of the people transferred to it, the scapegoat has become unholy, unclean, a thing abominable in God's sight, and therefore must not be offered to Jehovah in sacrifice. On the other hand, the animals offered in sacrifice are clean and most holy, sacred food worthy to be offered to God and to be eaten by priest and people: which would be impossible if the worshipper by the imposition of his hands had transferred his sin to the sacrifice. The original and general significance of the imposition of hands is that of dedication or blessing. When Jacob places his hands on the heads of his grandsons, or when the Levites are set apart for their functions by imposition of hands, or when Moses lays his hands on Joshua and appoints him his successor, the act has clearly the meaning of benediction, dedication, consecration. So when the worshipper brings his gift to the altar, and places his hand on its head, the natural interpretation of his act is that he is dedicating his gift to Jehovah or making formal transfer of ownership. These considerations justify the conclusion of Robertson Smith that "in ordinary burnt-offerings and sin-offerings the imposition of hands is not officially interpreted as a transference of sin to the victim, but rather has the same sense as in acts of blessing or consecration, where the idea no doubt is that the physical contact serves to identify them, but not to transfer guilt from the one to the other" (*Religion of the Semites*, p. 402). Another difficulty in the way of such a transformation of the meaning of sacrifice may be here added. If sacrifice implied the transference of the worshipper's sin and a vicarious death, it must have been offered for sin deserving of death. But, in fact, the sacrifices of Israel were offered by a covenant-people; and sins worthy of death, sins committed wittingly and with a high hand, could not be atoned for by any sacrifice (Num. xv. 30). The man who broke the covenant and deserved to die was put to death.

of ethical nomism generally prevails, it is overborne time and again by hopes and visions that far transcend a merely judicial view of God's government.

The priestly law itself teaches, as we may believe it taught from the first, that God is not to be appeased by sacrifice alone. To recover the favour of God the wrong-doer's first duty is to make restitution as far as he can for the wrong he has done. If he has committed a violation of trust, or has been guilty of deception or fraud against his neighbour, the law does not enjoin merely the presentation of a guilt-offering, but requires that the wrong-doer "shall restore that which he took by robbery or the thing he hath gotten by oppression, or the deposit which was committed to him, or the lost thing which he found, or anything about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in full, and shall add the fifth part more thereto."[1] It was generally recognized that not by sacrifice alone but "by mercy and truth is iniquity atoned for."[2] We may well believe that at the background of all the sacrificial ritual lay those moral requirements without which it was valueless in the sight of the God of righteousness.

But the prophets were not content that such moral requirements should rest in the background. The difference between the priestly and the prophetic view of the means of gaining God's favour was that in the one case the ritual of sacrifice was made of central value, whereas with the prophet the renovation of the spirit and moral life was set in the forefront. Had the sacrificial system taken its proper place as a symbol or expression of true faith and penitence, the prophets would doubtless have encouraged and supported it. But unfortunately much of the old nature-religion remained; and the ritual continued to be used as a surrogate for righteousness. It was treated as having intrinsic virtue, an *opus operatum*, squaring off the holy God and screening all deficiencies of moral conduct. Viewing it in that light, the prophets pour out upon it their scorn and indignation. With their deep and earnest conception of God's character,

[1] Lev. vi. 2–5; Exod. xxii. [2] Prov. xvi. 6.

not Messianic in the narrower sense, but in which prophetic inspiration strikes out a new line of thought as to the way of achieving the national salvation. In the idealization of the true Israel as the oppressed and suffering but in the end victorious and triumphant Servant of God, which forms the culminating vision of the second Isaiah, we have the first dim but positive recognition of the redemptive value of suffering.

The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is the crowning-point of Old Testament prophecy. Unfortunately it has been made too often the battle-ground of contending theological parties, who have interpreted it in accordance with their favourite preconceptions rather than in the light of contemporary prophetic teaching. To put it briefly, the historical interpretation seems to yield the following result. The exilic prophets—Jeremiah and Ezekiel—had already struck a strong individualistic note by contending that no man should suffer for the sins of another, whether father for son or son for father, but each man only for his own iniquity.[1] The soul that repenteth, it shall live: the soul that sinneth, it—and no other—shall die. But if this is the law of a just Divine government, how are the facts of solidarity to be explained? The prophets must have been aware of many discouraging facts of experience which seemed to contradict the individualist principle; and Jeremiah himself apparently laments that the facts do not tally with the ideal: "Our fathers have sinned, and are not, and we bear their iniquities."[2] The very fact of the exile presented the problem in a most crucial and concrete form. Why was Israel treated as the greatest sinner among all the nations? And why was the Israel of to-day, including some of God's noblest saints, so humiliated in the eyes of the world, and made to suffer vicariously, i.e., unjustly for the sins of others? For those who had definitely set aside the notion of mass-justice—the pseudo-justice which is satisfied with punishment and careless on whom it falls—and who believed in a Providence that was good and perfectly righteous, there

[1] Jer. xxxi. 29, 30; Ezek. xviii.

[2] Lam. v. 7.

was only one answer possible. And it came to this prophet with the all force of a revelation that the suffering of Israel, so largely vicarious, is interwoven in God's plan for the redemption of Israel and of the world. It is not to be viewed in the light of God's judicial providence, but in the light of His saving will. The suffering has been imposed, not in justice, but in grace: is not an act of judgment inflicted on the wrong persons, but an act of grace, as fulfilling the gracious purpose of a far-seeing Providence. The suffering Servant has indeed borne the iniquities of others; and God's will in permitting it will be justified by the result. In thus bearing the sins of the people, the Servant of God is not only preparing the way for his own triumph, but is providing the means for the reconstruction and redemption of the nation.

(*c*) While the prophetic religion was never whole-heartedly adopted by the people, its influence on the religious faith of Israel was far-reaching and substantial. This is seen very clearly in the change of interpretation that passed over the whole sacrificial ritual. In the earlier period of Israel's religion the sacrificial rites, whatever their varied meaning, had a material and efficacious value. Just as in nature-religion, so in the early faith of Israel they were either real gifts beneficial to the deity or real media conveying supernatural power to the worshippers. But later, and no doubt through the active protest of the prophets and the more spiritual influence of their moral faith, this earlier materialism of thought was discarded. Henceforward the sacrifice was for the most part interpreted symbolically: either as an act expressive of the gratitude, devotion or penitence of the worshipper, and valuable for what it expressed, or else simply as an act ordained and commanded by the law, and having its value in the obedience to the Divine will which its punctual performance indicated.

The symbolic interpretation is beautifully illustrated in the Psalms, which express the attitude of practical piety. Here the protest of the prophets against ritual worship has disappeared, but only because it has fulfilled

they could not imagine that God would accept such make-believe, or indeed that the righteousness of God would be satisfied with less than the righteousness of man. Accordingly, in express contradiction to the sacerdotal view-point, they proclaim that God is neither pleased with sacrifice nor did He ever require it; that righteousness is the one thing needful; and that God's forgiveness is not drawn from the shedding of blood, but is accorded only to the repentant heart. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith Jehovah: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."[1] "Wherewithal shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the most high God? Shall I come before him with offerings, with calves of a year old? . . . He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"[2]

So far, then, the characteristic note of prophecy is the insistence on the moral order. That God is governor and judge of all the nations: that His judgments are according to truth and fall impartially upon all: that they are not to be turned aside by outward prayers or priestly ceremonies, but move on, inexorable in their lightning path, to the destruction of the wicked: that the only hope of forgiveness and redemption lies along the line of repentance to righteousness; such are the dominant notes of the prophetic teaching. But prophecy is never confined to this ethical-nomistic view of God's judicial government. Blending with the conceptions of moral order and self-redemption, we find always emerging the new principle of the Divine everlasting covenant of grace, and the faith that in the coming future that grace will be triumphantly realized. One may picture the prophetic mind as an ellipse, in which the

[1] Isaiah i. [2] Micah vi.

thought of the Divine judicial government occupies the one centre, while the other focuses the higher faith of the everlasting undeserved grace.

Thus, in his teaching as to the Divine readiness to forgive the repentant and returning sinner, the prophet already steps beyond the nomistic scheme. While he insists that there is no possibility of redemption except through repentance and righteousness, it does not occur to him that man can thereby purchase the Divine forgiveness. It is because Jehovah is what He is, the God of grace who has made everlasting covenant with Israel, that He is willing to open the windows of heaven in blessing on the first signs of Israel's repentance. "Turn unto me, and I will return unto you"; "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thine iniquities for My own Name's sake!" Here the legal relationship with God is on the point of passing into terms of moral and personal relation; for to the repentant, the merciful, the broken-hearted, there is proclaimed a grace that is beyond deserving.

This larger faith receives concrete form in the prophetic visions of the future. The prophets were not content to announce that God was waiting to forgive on condition of repentance and reformation; for in truth they recognized that there was little prospect of such a condition being realized on a wide and national scale. One and all, the prophets have the weary sense, borne in upon their minds by painful experience, that prophetic appeals and denunciations are alike ineffectual, that Israel cannot or will not repent. Thus they reach the insight—from which the Messianic hope starts—that there is no redemption possible without Divine intervention. They are saved from despair by turning to the future and looking to God for some great work in which the spiritual reconstruction of the nation will be at length secured. Israel's redemption can be realized only when God reveals Himself in a new way, and so mediates His righteous will to men that His law will be enthroned in their minds and engraven on their hearts.

We need not consider the details of the redemption-hope of the prophets. But we must notice one instance,

its mission by giving the ritual a new valuation. Sacrifice is no longer an *opus operatum,* claiming first consideration as being efficacious in its own right; its main value lies in the attitude it symbolizes and the spirit that underlies its performance. For the Psalmist the old distinctions, dear to the priest, between burnt-offering, peace-offering, guilt-offering, and so on, are practically forgotten; and we find substituted such names as "sacrifices of joy," "sacrifices of thanksgiving," "sacrifices of righteousness." The essence of piety is the moral attitude toward God, as seen in the conformity of heart and life to His holy will: the actual sacrifice is of secondary value, as giving that moral attitude its natural channel of expression.

In the later rabbinical development the entire religion of Israel was hardened into fixity of form, and forced into the framework of the most elaborate system of nomism the world has seen. Under this scheme righteousness was not merely obedience to the will of God, as unfolding in the conscience for the guidance of the human will, but rather a scrupulous conformity in every act to the positive prescriptions of the written Law. These rabbinical writers—the Schoolmen of Judaism—sought by a minute interpretation of the law of Moses and the prophets, and by the aid of their sacred traditions, to evolve a system of duty which should meet every occasion and circumstance of life. And in harmony with this they sought to determine the relations of God to man from the point of view of the written Law and a consistent judicial government, and thus definitely to solve the question of a troubled conscience: How shall a man be just before God?

Their answer, if one may venture to summarize their teaching, is briefly this. With a few possible exceptions no man is absolutely just in the sense of being wholly free from sin. But short of absolute justice, there is a justice which God graciously accepts as sufficient—a legal righteousness in which the evil done is outweighed by other acts of righteousness or of atonement. Thus the man whose good deeds more than balance his evil

deeds, has the balance in his favour, and is legally just. Among these good deeds there are some which are specially incumbent upon the sinner, and have special power to cleanse and re-establish righteousness: these constitute the various forms of atonement. He can make atonement by penitence, by confession of sin, by acts of contrition, by fasting, by prayer. He can also atone by taking part in the sacrifices, especially the annual sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, the supreme sacrifice of cleansing. What is still more to the purpose, he can atone by submitting patiently to suffering and humbly accepting the chastisements of Heaven. "Chastisements avail even more than sacrifice; for in the latter man gives his possessions merely, in the former he gives his own body." He can also atone for past sins by specially meritorious acts, such as lavish almsgiving, or unwearied study of the Law, or deeds of eminent faithfulness to it—as when his faithfulness takes the form of martyrdom, which has a special atoning virtue.

But that is not all. For if the sinner is a Jew, there are other considerations that may be legally turned to account. When the individual's actions are weighed in the scales of justice, the result may be doubtful; but if he is a son of Abraham, shall not God count it to him for righteousness? Thus the merits of the fathers may intercede for him, and avail to turn the wavering balance in his favour. And further, there may rightly be included in vicarious merit the merit that accrues from vicarious suffering. Did not the Maccabean saints realize that their sufferings were for the sins of their people, and pray that their martyr-death might avail as a means of national cleansing and ransom others from the wrath of the Almighty? [1] Thus the sufferings of the fathers and saints of old go to the credit of their descendants, and their death has atoning virtue not only for themselves but for Israel as a whole. Nay, further, even the involuntary sufferings of other nations may be reckoned to the credit of the Jew. Did not God give Egypt as a ransom for

[1] Cp. II Maccabees vii. 37, 38; IV Maccabees vi. 29, xvii. 21, where the terms used are *δικη*, *καθαρσιον*, *ἀντιψυχον*, *ἱλαστηριον*.

Israel, when he plagued Egypt with calamities which Israel too had deserved, and was thereby enabled to let His own people go free? And so in the coming day of judgment God will again give the heathen nations for Israel's ransom. He will destroy these nations, casting them down into Gehenna; and then by applying their sufferings to balance the sins of Israel, He will justify His elect people and make them worthy of the future blessedness.

So the Rabbins worked out their elaborate and strictly nomistic scheme of thought. It was as if God were a majestic judicial Recorder who kept a book of Justice, and a twofold account of every man's doings and sufferings. On the debtor page are written down the sins he has committed—his moral misdemeanours, his transgressions of the law, his neglect of the study of the Torah, or of attendance at the sacrificial worship, or of observance of the Sabbath, or of the duty of almsgiving; while on the other, the credit side, are recorded his acts of legal obedience, his prayers, fasts, and alms, his attendance at sacred feast and sacrifice, to which are added—if he is a son of Abraham—the merits, sufferings and intercessions of the saints. According as the balance shows, the individual is justified in God's sight or subject to His condemnation.

In this legalist religion of Rabbinism the profounder moral values are lost sight of, and, what is especially noteworthy, all the more inspiring elements of the prophetic faith. The grace of God is not altogether denied; but the legal categories overshadow all others, and the gracious side of God's character is seen merely in this that He has given a law to Israel, or that He accepts vicarious merit, or that He rewards those who have obeyed His commandments. The rabbins have entirely ignored the profound declaration which is the highest and the final word of the prophetic faith: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thine iniquities for Mine own Name's sake." And while the rabbins continue to look forward to the Messianic era for the complete redemption of Israel, their conception of it is no longer bound up with

the redemptive ideal, but is limited to the final triumph of Israel over her enemies, as the due reward of her piety.

The inadequacy of this scheme is no less apparent in its individual application. It does not secure the end it has in view, justice before God; it does not yield harmony or peace with God in the sense of a trustful, satisfying fellowship. Its basis in positive prescriptions, often external and incapable of being perfectly obeyed; its conception of individual merit and even of supererogatory vicarious merit; its view of suffering as legal compensation, vicariously applicable: all this points to a judgment which is ever changing and undecided, and whose final issue can never be assured. Under this scheme the religious life stretches out into an interminable series of efforts, all marked more or less by failure; and no security can be found that the judge of all will sum up the reckoning favourably. The more earnestly a man strives to fulfil all requirements, the more painfully he must feel the impossibility of attainment; and such endless striving, accompanied by endless failure, is liable to end in distraction and despair. It is not always or necessarily so. God be praised, there were many saintly people in later Judaism who escaped instinctively from the trammels of such a creed into the air of a worthier faith. But for those who took seriously and logically that nomistic standpoint, it was bound to end in the cry of Paul: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

CHAPTER III

REDEMPTIVE RELIGIONS

BEFORE passing to the redemptive teaching of Christianity we may briefly notice two religions which transcend the nomistic standpoint and strive to reach a more satisfying solution of life's central problem. These are found in Chinese Taoism and Indian Buddhism, both of which represent a radical antithesis to the legal-moral conception of religion. Even a slight survey of these religions will serve to set in clearer light the positive character of the Christian redemption.

(A) TAOISM AND BUDDHISM

Lâo-tsze, the Chinese sage, sets forth his new way of salvation in a short treatise, the Tao-Teh-King.[1] According to this work the usual ways of living by struggle and competition are subversive of spiritual life. True blessedness is not dependent on external gains or on the fulfilment of external rules, whether ceremonial or moral. It is a thing of the soul to be achieved by conforming life to the ways of the Tao.

The Tao is Lâo-tsze's name for the supreme Being. It is the restful heaven, from which all things have originated and to which all return. Its main characteristic is rest or quiet activity: it moves to its blessed ends unconsciously and without any fretting of painful effort. And so for man the path to redemption and blessedness lies in a return to the quiet ways of heaven, to the likeness of Tao.

He sets forth this ideal by contrasting it with the false

[1] Translated in *The Sacred Book of the East.*

ideals generally pursued. Men hope to attain the Kingdom of blessedness by striving, rivalry and competition, or by the constant following of prescribed rules; but instead of drawing nearer to the life of Tao by such violent methods, they are by their very efforts wandering farther and farther into the wilderness. For Tao is rest, the very antithesis of effort and uneasy desire. The true method of salvation, therefore, is to cease from striving: to cherish the restfulness of an unambitious and disengaged mind; to be content with the lowest place; to return good for evil, and let revengeful feeling die away. And similarly in political life, the salvation of the state will not come through a multiplicity of laws, or an increase of wealth, which is simply an increase of superfluities, and still less by aggressive war and the oppression of other peoples; but rather by weaning the people from ambitious desires, and refraining from innovations which excite remark and may awaken opposition. "The earliest rulers did their work and were successful in their undertakings; while all the people said, We are as we are, of ourselves."[1]

Quite in keeping with these principles is Lâo-tsze's philosophy of history, in which he shows how men have declined from the golden age to the lower levels of the

[1] Lâo-tsze illustrated his teaching with striking metaphors. "He who stands on his tiptoes does not stand firm, and he who strains his legs does not walk easily. So he who displays himself does not shine; he who asserts his own views aggressively is not distinguished; and he who is self-conceited has no superiority allowed him by others." "It is by not making himself great that the wise man accomplishes great things." "If anyone seeks to gain the Kingdom for himself by what he does, I know he will not succeed; for the Kingdom is a spiritual reality, and cannot be got by active doing. He who would so win it, destroys it; he who would so grasp it, loses it." "The Tao is like the emptiness of a vessel; we must be on our guard against all fulness [the swelling of pride]." "Who can make muddy water clear? Let it be still, and it will gradually become clear." "The highest excellence is like water; for water benefits all things and occupies its place without striving, taking even the lowest place, which men dislike. Hence its ways resemble those of the Tao." We may note, too, what he says of war. "Arms are instruments of evil omen; the wise man will use them only when compelled by necessity; even victory is undesirable." "He who has killed multitudes of men should weep for them with bitterest grief."

present. In that primitive age men followed the ways of Tao and did what was right without discussion or reflection. In process of time they came to reflect on their actions and so became consciously righteous [or self-righteous]; and thence came naturally further successive declensions. "When the great Tao ceased to be observed, benevolence and righteousness [as self-conscious virtues] came into vogue; next appeared wisdom and shrewdness; and then ensued hypocrisy." Or, as he puts it again, "when the Tao was lost, its attributes appeared; when its attributes were lost, benevolence appeared; when benevolence was lost, righteousness appeared; and when righteousness was lost, the proprieties appeared. Now propriety is the attenuated form of loyalty and good faith; it is the commencement of disorder." Obviously, for Lâo-tsze, the source of man's fall lay in his growing self-consciousness. Even to aim at doing right implies that we have fallen from the standard. Even the relatively good endeavour of those who seek to reform themselves is doomed to failure; it is but another movement in the downward path which leads to self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

So Lâo-tsze contrasts the ways of fallen man with the true and original way of heaven, and calls for a radical regeneration. To return to nature's simple ways: to become children in spirit and live one's life without worry or self-questioning: such is the path of blessedness and peace, leading us into the likeness of Tao.

One cannot but recognize the high spiritual value of Lâo-tsze's doctrine of salvation. It is valuable as a protest, not only against the perversion of life's aims which comes through pride and selfish ambition, but also against the morbid self-analysis which often besets the idealist and tends to frustrate his efforts. One may find points of contact between this attitude of the Chinese sage and Rousseau's attack on modern civilization with its futile refinement and culture and its vice-breeding luxury; or Carlyle's criticism of the self-consciousness and painful self-analysis of modern times, as contrasted with wholesome, spontaneous and self-forgetting activity; or John

Ruskin's plea for a return to the spirit of childhood with its joy and harmony.[1]

But while such criticisms have their value as a warning against the fussy self-consciousness which a complex civilization tends to increase, or against the self-analysis which issues in moral anæmia, one cannot but see that the position is overstated. In Lâo-tsze the negative ideal is so comprehensive that little room is left for any positive element. Mere passivity, or instinctive activity without any conscious goal, can scarcely commend itself as a lofty ideal. We are saved many troubles doubtless by relaxing our efforts and letting things slide, or by going to sleep; but this is not salvation unto life. And while Lâo-tsze's picture of the golden age of primitive humanity has its attraction, the proposal to turn the wheel of progress backward is an evasion rather than a solution of the problem of life. To return from the life of reflection and moral consciousness to the earlier stage of instinct and simplicity is neither practicable nor desirable. It is better to face the problem of life than to endeavour to creep back into conditions where it has not emerged. We can admire the simplicity and delightful unconsciousness seen in the activities of the child, but what is beautiful in the child may not be admirable in the man. And, after all, the spontaneous but wayward goodness of the child is less valuable that the sustained goodness of the

[1] "Ages of heroism are not ages of moral philosophy; virtue, when it can be philosophized of, has become aware of itself; is sickly and beginning to decline. A spontaneous habitual spirit of chivalrous valour shrinks together and perks itself up into shrivelled Points of Honour; human courtesy and nobleness of mind dwindle into punctilious Politeness" (cp. the "proprieties" of Lâo-tsze). "Always the characteristic of right performance is a certain spontaneity, an unconsciousness. The healthy know not of their health, but only the sick. Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; whisper not to thy own heart, 'How worthy is this action,' for then it is already becoming worthless" (*Miscellaneous Essays*, "Characteristics"). "You can't go into a conventicle but you'll hear plenty of talk of back-sliding. Back-sliding indeed! I can tell you, on the way most of us go, the faster we slide back the better. Slide back into the cradle if going on is into the grave:—back, I tell you; back—out of your long faces, and into your long clothes. It is among children only, and as children only, that you will find medicine for your healing and true wisdom for your teaching" (*Crown of Wild Olive*).

man who has fought his way to a clean and noble ideal, and habituated himself to the pursuit of it.[1]

The Buddhist scheme of salvation is more positive in some respects than the Taoist, but much more negative in its fundamental conception. It is more positive than Taoism in so far as it recognizes the value of moral endeavour and active brotherly service; but in its ultimate ideal of Nirvana as the final goal of life, its negative character comes prominently into view.

According to Gautama, surnamed the Buddha, all the outward evils of life come from the inward evils of ignorance and ambitious desire; and the cure for evil lies in enlightenment as to the nature of true blessedness. We can only be saved from the evils of existence when we discover the truth that life is an empty illusion, and when we proceed to root out all desire for it. But, before we arrive at the ultimate goal and the perfect cure, a long process, often continuing through many successive lives, is indispensable; and the Buddha has set forth some of the stages of this process for the guidance of his followers. In the movement towards the perfect goal, both faith and works have their place, with a moderate use of ascetic practices. The disciple of the Buddha must first be conscious of the vanity of life, and his need of redemption from it. Then he must proceed to regulate his life, passing from stage to stage of moral perfection. He will begin by conquering his more turbulent passions. To this end he will withdraw from an environment which excites the passions and is hostile to meditation, and will practise a moderate asceticism. But the ascetic life is to be practised as a means, and not an end; for it is only useful so far as it leads the soul to possess itself in knowledge and right living. "Neither abstinence, nor going naked, nor

[1] "Childlike innocence no doubt has in it much that is sweet and attractive; but only because it reminds us of what the spirit must win for itself. The harmonious existence of childhood is a gift from the hand of nature; the second harmony must spring from the labour and culture of the spirit. And so the words of Christ, 'Except ye become as little children, etc.,' are very far from telling us that we must always remain children" (Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 46).

shaving the head, nor a rough garment, nor offerings to priests, nor sacrifices to the gods, will cleanse a man who is not free from delusions." Further, having purged the soul from baser passions, he must proceed to weed out the remaining evils. He must cultivate the gentler virtues—kindness to all beings, the grace of forgiveness, the helpfulness of brotherhood, the all-conquering grace of love. Anger in others is to be overcome by kindness; evil by good; the liar by truth. "Never in this world does hatred cease by hatred; hatred ceases by love; this is always its nature." In enlarging on such moral precepts the Buddha approximates in a striking degree to the Christian ideal. But the virtues enjoined are mainly of the negative and passive order; they are not animated by the hopeful and energetic spirit which seeks for positive remedies to human ills. In any case they form only a lower stage on the way to religious perfection, which consists in complete enlightenment and complete indifference. With the extinction of all finite interests, the soul at last shuts off the influence of the world, destroys the connecting link which binds it to the never-ending chain of existences, and enters the Kingdom of Peace—Nirvana.

This doctrine of Nirvana presents as negative a conception of redemption and of the goal of human life as can well be entertained. And the logical mind will be apt to conclude from the evil of existence, and from the Buddhist conception of the destruction of the Karma that connects this life with the future, that the goal of the Buddhist is simply annihilation, the return to nothingness. If all existence is evil, the sole good to expect is death, or non-existence. Yet such a logical deduction is precarious, and certainly does not harmonize with Buddhist teaching. In the first place it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of mere nothingness, and it would be even absurd to make an ideal of a mere negation.[1] And again,

[1] Thus, when Socrates, in his Apology, discourses of the various possibilities after death, and considers annihilation as one of the possible alternatives, he declares that if this be our lot it will be a wonderful gain, "as it were a sleep in which there is no dream." In other words, his negative conception does not quite exclude a positive element.

it only needs another turn of logic to convince us that since the world of existence is itself illusion and mere negation, Nirvana, which is the negation of that world, must be taken as the true positive. Thus when the Buddhist speaks of Nirvana in negative terms as the absolute reversal of all we know or can conceive, his negatives may imply the positive reality of that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man

It is certain that Buddhism was no religion of despair, but meant as a gospel to despairing men, enabling them to triumph over all evils, among which death was expressly included. And though the note of triumph sounds rather hollow, and its ideal seems empty of moral and spiritual content, the very fact that it was received for centuries as a gospel indicates that it did contain some element of positive yearning. It is in this sense that John Caird pronounces judgment on it as a transition to a more positive ideal. "A religion whose cardinal doctrine is the negation of the finite bears unconscious evidence to the fact that it has already transcended the finite. Before the mind that has become profoundly convinced that the things that are seen are temporal, there at least floats some vision of the things unseen and eternal; and if the vision be as yet shadowy and uncertain, that it can be even unconsciously apprehended as an ideal is the silent prophecy of a future when it shall be grasped as a reality. Have we not here, therefore, a principle which enables us to discern in Buddhism something more than the impossible worship of a blank negation? . . . Was it not the eternal and divine, though it could only as yet be defined as the negative or contradiction of the transient and human, which gave their religion its secret hold over men's hearts? Whilst they seemed to themselves only to seek after escape from a world that was unreal and a life that was nothing but vanity, what they really though unconsciously sought after was participation in that infinite life which is and abideth for ever."[1]

[1] *St. Giles' Lectures*, second series.

(B) Christianity

It may be well here to summarize the results we have reached, and to show wherein lies the inadequacy of the religions that have been described. Whatever anticipations of truth they contain, the non-Christian religions have done little more than bring the problem of redemption into view.

In early religion the main thought is that of redemption from the outward evils of life, or from the ill-will of the gods as expressed in these evils. The fellowship of heaven is not yet regarded as an end desirable in itself; it is chiefly sought as a means to secure the continuance and well-being of the physical life. Men seek to get rid of evil directly by means of imitative cathartic practices, and at the same time they propitiate the supernatural beings by gifts of food or other offerings, or they seek by eating of Divine food themselves to assimilate the Divine power and so secure the needed blessing. Such is the sacrificial religion of Nature.

In the Moral religions the sacrificial system is either rejected or relegated to a secondary place. The favour of God depends essentially on man's obedience to the Divine law of righteousness; and restoration to that favour can only be secured by repentance and return to obedience. While such religions far transcend the standpoint of natural religion, they have their own limitations. They have nothing to substitute for the more mystic and sacramental aspect of sacrificial religion; and hence the sacrificial ritual continues, though really unassimilated. Further, the righteousness enjoined is mainly a matter of outward practice; it is not recognized as an infinite ideal. It is also presumed that the Divine sanctions of reward and punishment are sufficient to turn the lives of men into righteous paths. They preach moral reformation rather than regeneration; their aim is the quantitative increase of moral activities rather than the remoulding of the soul's life and spiritual outlook. Such is the religion of Morality.

The higher religions are appropriately named Redemptive religions in so far as they alone recognize the deeper moral and spiritual need of man, and that no one can by any amount of moral striving enter the Kingdom of blessedness. Both Taoism and Buddhism emphasize the deeper needs of the spirit, and the inadequacy of a quantitative righteousness. The Taoist tries to solve the moral problem by calling men back from the life of conscious morality to the life of pristine innocence; the Buddhist, by calling men to despise life and setting before them an abstract transcendent goal. But in either case the problem is evaded and not solved, since life is evacuated of its meaning. In contrast with these the Jewish religion has a positive redemptive outlook, since it pictures the coming regeneration of human life, and looks to God himself as the author of it.

From the bosom of Judaism sprang Christianity, the sole positive religion of Redemption. Christianity is rooted in a new conception of Divine fellowship, which carries with it a new conception of what redemption means. In the nature-religions the thought of Divine fellowship implies at most a kind of physical communion; in the moral religions it is limited to the relationship of a subject to his master and law-giver; while in Taoism and Buddhism it dissolves into an abstraction. In Christianity alone do we reach the ideal of a filial and whole-hearted personal communion. This ideal so transcendently surpasses all others that the redemptive means to attain it must also be differently conceived. What is needed to realize such an ideal cannot be merely the fulfilment of outward priestly practices, nor an accumulation of moral efforts; rather we need a new fashioning of the soul itself, such as will lift it from the old ruts and teach it to wing its way to God. The new method of redemption is so distinct from the old religious ways that these are frequently an obstacle rather than a help. So Christ himself judged when He pointed out that the publicans and harlots—those who were less thirled to the reputable but narrow methods of the past—were nearer the Kingdom of God than the righteous people of

His generation: a pronouncement which estimates rightly the value of a merely quantitative morality.

As we pass to the consideration of the Christian redemption, and the many theories which have been current in the Church as to its meaning, we may say, looking back on the road we have travelled, that what we have learned has been for the most part negative. We have been taught what redemption is *not*, and where we cannot expect to find it. For a positive answer to the question what redemption is, and by what means it is to be secured, we must turn to the religion of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IV

REDEMPTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

(A) The Teaching of Jesus

The teaching of Jesus is founded on the Old Testament, as interpreted by a pure spiritual experience. He based His doctrine of God and salvation on the teaching of the prophets: He was baptized with the baptism of John, the last of the prophets. His first word was the great command of the prophets, Repent! He proclaimed that there was no coming of men to God, or coming of God to men, except by way of repentance and the manifestation of a changed and renewed life. Nor was this essential condition altered by the conjoined declaration that the Kingdom of God was at hand; for there was no entrance into the Kingdom possible except by the way of repentance. The nearness of the Kingdom of God was announced as a new ground and motive of repentance, both by John the Baptist and by Jesus; by the former, mainly because the coming of the Kingdom meant the destruction of the ungodly; by the latter, because the coming Kingdom brought Divine blessings for the securing of which repentance was the essential human condition.

What distinguishes the teaching of Christ from that of the prophets is that He adopts the spiritual and universal elements of their teaching, but sets aside their cruder ethical ideas and national aspirations. He thus opens the way to a deeper conception of what salvation means, and of what repentance involves. Salvation is now definitely salvation from sin, and that not merely from

evil conduct but from the evil heart of pride, selfishness and lovelessness,—from that distrust of God and moral disharmony which alienates the soul from its own highest good. Or, to put it positively, it is salvation into the life that is life indeed, the life of purity, meekness, self-denial, love—the life of the children of God, which consists essentially in likeness to Him. And similarly the thought of repentance is now clothed with deeper meaning. It is no longer a moral reformation; it is the turning of the heart to God and goodness; it is the return to that life which Christ himself presented to men as none of the prophets before Him; it is the awakening of the soul to that filial relationship and likeness to God in which man realizes his highest ideal.

Christ's great mission on earth was to mediate to men this new life which begins in repentance. He saw men as children who had wandered from their father's home, and dedicated His life to seek and to save them; and that not merely by the ministry of preaching or teaching, but even more by the ministry of His devoted life.

The preaching of Jesus had two markedly distinct characteristics or tones. To some He spoke in the old style of prophetic denunciation, while to others—not less sinful—He spoke with the gracious accents of compassion and encouragement. Upon the Scribes and Pharisees He thunders out woes in the spirit of Isaiah or Amos; denouncing their inward corruption, their blindness to the spiritual teaching of their own law, their futile Rabbinical distinctions, their narrow-minded proselytism, their frequent hypocrisy. In such denunciation He was consciously carrying out a prophetic mission; preparing the way of the Lord among those who were altogether blind to His higher mission. But in such preaching Jesus was not employing His own distinctive method, which aimed rather to attract than to repel, by appealing to the better elements of the soul. In His teaching as to the blessedness of the coming Kingdom, the Fatherhood of God, and His ready forgiveness, He touches the deeper chords of the human heart; and when in His treatment of unhardened sinners He manifests a keen brotherly sympathy for their

weakness as well as an unlimited faith in the higher possibilities, and so brings home to the penitent the gospel of grace—it is then we see the Christ pursuing His real mission and following directly His own method. For then He is carrying on His saving, redeeming work; strengthening faith, ripening repentance, and encouraging the still feeble flame of the new life.

But the saving work of Jesus cannot be understood till we reunite His teaching with the life of which it was but the partial expression. For His revelation in word was but one of the ways in which He revealed Himself. He presented the content of His message in the concrete form of His own life. He was not simply one inspired with a Divine message; He was Himself the message. He set Himself before men as the Divine message incarnate, as the very channel of the new life He proclaimed to be possible. He Himself possessed, and knew that He possessed, the Divine life; and He had the power, and knew that He possessed the power, to communicate it to others. This was His saving mission; and in carrying it out He necessarily placed Himself in the forefront of His teaching. "Come unto *me* . . . take my yoke upon you and learn of *me*, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls."

All this is so excessively simple that the theological mind is apt to be startled, and to inquire where the specific necessity of mediation enters. If repentance is all that is necessary to regain the Divine favour, what need is there of any atoning work? And the systematic theologian is fain to meet his own difficulty by reflecting that Christ's work went far beyond his explicit teaching, that the cross of Calvary was still in the future, and that Christ could not fully teach the unique significance of His death till that sacrifice had been actually made. This is, so far, reasonable; the death of Christ might well have a significance which He could not embody in His earlier teaching. But the difficulty returns in a new form; for we must at least expect that a Christian interpretation of the cross will be in accordance with the principles that underlay the Master's own teaching. And the point is

that Christ never for one moment imagined, any more than the prophets of Israel did, that there was any real barrier on God's side to the forgiveness of sins. To Christ, as to the prophets, repentance and forgiveness were strictly correlative. If Christ laid more emphasis than the prophets had done on the prevenient grace of God, and also on the radical nature of repentance—so deepening their teaching in various ways—it remains true that neither He nor they thought of anything more than true repentance as necessary for the enjoyment of God's forgiveness.

The real solution of the difficulty lies in a different direction. We reach it when we realize the simple truth that Christ's work was, not to render God forgiving, but to render man forgivable. Christ did not merely preach repentance, and the gospel of God's readiness to forgive; His great mission was to effect the radical change, which we have called repentance, in the lives of men. To save men who were wanderers from God was no easy task for one to whom salvation meant the lifting of the soul into the full blessedness of God's Kingdom. It was a task accompanied with peril to one who attempted it; giving rise to innumerable prejudices and antipathies in the mind of those who had no sympathy with Christ's mission and method. Long before Christ came to the cross, He had anticipated it as the natural sequel of His work among a people whose leaders were from the first opposed to Him. It was not that Christ started in His ministry with any definite conception of His coming death. Unless He was unaccountably silent about it, we must suppose that it was in the latter part of his ministry that He faced the possibility and then the inevitableness of it, and began to ponder its meaning. It was at Cæsarea Philippi, just before He began to set His face to Jerusalem, that He openly spoke to His disciples of His coming suffering.

How then did Jesus think of these trials, and relate them to His unshaken faith in the providence and purpose of God? A few significant sayings are found, the interpretation of which must be sought in the general context of His faith and experience. Speaking generally, we

may assume that from the moment He saw the cross on the horizon, He made Himself at home with the dark prospect, and accepted it as quite in accordance with the perfect will of the Father. It lay apparently in the path of His mission; it was the natural outcome of the circumstances of His life. He, who had already devoted His life to the saving of men, was now to be called to yield it in a more literal way. And when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, His momentary doubt of its inevitableness passed away, there was no other conclusion possible than that God had so ordained it, and was meaning to use it for the high ends of His mission. Only on the surface could it portend failure; in reality it must be the pathway to the wider and completer accomplishment of His saving work, a means to the fuller in-bringing of the Kingdom.

Take now the significant sayings of Christ Himself on this great subject. The first was called forth by the ambitious request of James and John on the way to Jerusalem, when Christ told His disciples that the true law of the Kingdom was not domination but service, "even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." We may leave to historical exegesis to discover the exact equivalent in Aramaic of the word "ransom," and all the ramifications of its use in the Old Testament. Meanwhile the sense is sufficiently obvious from the context, and cannot be overturned by any minute distinctions in the shades of meaning attachable to a single word. The last clause must be read in the light of the preceding. Christ's death, as viewed in anticipation by the Saviour Himself, is the last great act of ministration or service to mankind, the crowning achievement of His saving, liberating, ransoming work. But the manner in which His death will serve this end is not here explained.

Passing from this occasional saying to the solemn words of the Last Supper in Jerusalem, we get some further indication of Christ's thought on this subject. There are four distinct and differing accounts of the Supper; and we must remain uncertain as to the actual words em-

ployed. Yet all are agreed in the main thought, "This is my body"; "This is my blood of the covenant"; "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Such sayings obviously lead the mind back to the old covenant sealed at Mount Sinai, when Moses sprinkled part of the blood of sacrifice on the people and said, "Behold, the blood of the covenant which Jehovah has made with you." Christ here points back to the old communion sacrifice of antiquity, and invites His disciples to interpret His death in that light. His blood shed on the cross will be the sealing of a new covenant with God; those who associate with Him in the fellowship of His death will find in it the mainspring of a new and Divine life. In thus associating His own act of sacrifice with the old covenant or communion sacrifices of former times, Christ does not indeed explain to the theological mind *how* the ends of redemption are to be accomplished by His death, or *how* the Divine life is to be mediated by it; but the word certainly reveals Christ's thought that from this death new life will issue to men, and that the cross will prove for human redemption of central and permanent significance.

(B) The Teaching of Paul

The death of Jesus struck a cruel blow at the hopes of His followers. They had looked for the immediate establishment of the Kingdom, and their expectations were laid in the dust. Yet their faith, though stunned, was not entirely crushed. They had already learned to trust a vision higher than their own, and they must have remembered their Master's outlook on coming events, and His anticipation of death as a preparation for the fuller establishment of God's Kingdom. The news of His resurrection immediately rallied their faith and awakened a new enthusiastic hope. Their Master had conquered death, was exalted to God's right hand, would speedily return in the clouds to establish His Kingdom and to bless all who repented of their sins and accepted the new faith.

The early Christian community of Jerusalem had no

theory as to the positive significance of Christ's death. The crucifixion had been a stumbling-block to their faith, and they were content at first to have the stumbling-block removed. What had seemed a victory for the forces of evil was declared to have taken place according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. It was the wicked act of lawless men, but foreseen and provided for by God, who had foiled their wicked design by raising Jesus from the dead. The risen Lord was now in heaven, and would shortly come again—not in weakness this time, but in power—to restore all things and establish His Kingdom.[1]

But the very fact that the death of Christ was foreknown and predicted by the prophets, and by the Master Himself, would prepare the early Church to regard that death as a stage in the working out of the Divine purpose, and so to ascribe to it a positive value. That it was a criminal act of lawless men was only the external aspect of the crucifixion, and by no means exhausted its meaning. If the criminality of the forces that compassed Christ's death still occupied the foreground of their thought, the sublimity of the sufferer was not forgotten, and the fact that He suffered for sins not His own. They found an illuminating parallel in the old Isaianic prophecy of the Servant of God, whose undeserved and vicarious sufferings were to pave the way to Israel's redemption.[2] Just as the suffering Servant was involved in the lot of his sinful nation, suffered for sins not his own, and thus paved the way under God's gracious providence to his own triumph and the healing of the nation, so Christ's death was a vicarious sacrifice which would be turned to a glorious issue by the gracious will of a righteous God. There is no indication that the early community advanced further in their interpretation of the cross, or saw as yet its vital significance for the renewal of man's spiritual life and for the forgiveness of sins. It was not the death of Christ, but rather the fact that the risen Lord was about to return with power, which constituted the fore-

[1] Cp. Acts ii. 22–24 ; iii. 13–21 ; iv. 10–12.
[2] Cp. Acts viii. 32, 33.

ground of their teaching and the basis on which they summoned men to repent that their sins might be blotted out before the great Day.

It was the Apostle Paul who set the cross of Christ in the very foreground of faith, and discovered in it a new specific meaning. Paul by no means abandoned the common apocalyptic conception of a future salvation, but he conjoined with it the profounder view that Christ by His vicarious suffering had brought to men a present redemption and already triumphed over the world's alien powers. He advanced far beyond the earlier thought that Christ's death was foreknown and foreordained of God, or that it was a necessary step to His resurrection and ascension and future triumph; he maintained that Christ's vicarious suffering was in itself a vicarious triumph over sin and the flesh and all the powers of evil.

For a clear understanding of Paul's theology one must take into account three religious factors—his Pharisaic training, his Hellenistic environment, and his own definite religious experience. The Rabbinical teaching took deep root in Paul's receptive mind, and even when its principles were rejected later, it still retained a formative influence on Paul's language and modes of argument. The influence of the Hellenistic religious thought may have been none the less real that it was unconsciously imbibed; and the fact that Paul was a citizen of Tarsus throws light on his world-wide outlook and interest. But whatever other influences were active, whether positively or negatively, in Paul's mental development, the most quickening and radical factor must still be sought in his conversion experience.

Previous to his conversion Paul was a loyal disciple of the Pharisaic school theology, and lived in strict conformity with its precepts. Yet his earnest spirit found no satisfaction in such conformity, for though he lived a blameless life—according to the Pharisaic standard—and even exceeded in Pharisaic zeal, he found himself no whit nearer the goal. Behind the ceremonial and outward rules there loomed always the further moral requirements of the law; and the more he strove to meet

the never-ending requirement, the more he felt the weakness of the flesh and the power of sin within him. His very conscientiousness drove him to despair, though he still struggled feverishly to maintain his Rabbinical faith by persecuting its opponents. The crisis came in that wonderful vision on the road to Damascus, when the Christ whom he had persecuted was revealed to him and took possession of his soul. Henceforth his life was transformed, and with his new attitude to Christ his world of thought was also transfigured and enlarged. Through Christ he was lifted into a new world where grace reigned; where the burden of sin and the bondage of the law were done away, and slavery was transformed to the obedience of sonship.

The theology of Paul is rooted in this experience of the new redeeming power that had enabled him to triumph over sin and evil. His objective theory of the cross is indeed little more than the expansion of his inner experience: the crisis of Calvary is interpreted in terms of the crisis of the individual soul. Just as the Divine Christ revealing himself in the individual believer triumphs over the forces of sin and evil, delivers the soul from bondage and fear, and introduces a Divine spiritual life, so Paul conceives Christ on the cross as manifesting a Divine life which triumphs over sin and suffering and death, and as thus establishing a new power of redemption in the world. Or—to enlarge the picture somewhat—he conceives of Christ as the Son of God coming down from the heavenly sphere, laying aside His Divine glory, clothing Himself in our human flesh, submitting Himself to the evil conditions of human life, and becoming obedient even to death; and then finally on the cross, in the last crucial conflict with sin and evil, vanquishing them in the very hour of their seeming victory, and bringing their dominion to an end. This triumph of the cross becomes for Paul the archetype of the Christian's death to sin and renewal in righteousness; for the believer by his union with Christ is a sharer in His triumphant death. Just as Christ, who suffered vicariously all that sin could inflict on Him, finally by His death brought its jurisdiction

and power to an end—for he who is dead is beyond its sphere—so the Christian, dying with Christ, is dead to sin, and as risen with Christ is alive to righteousness. Or again, as in the cross we see the sinful flesh of humanity crucified, condemned and destroyed, so he who is in Christ reproduces the same conquest over sin, and is able to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.[1] However variously Christ's sacrifice is depicted, it is invariably understood as a triumphant achievement for man's redemption, and reproducing itself, through faith, in the individual experience.

This ethical-mystical doctrine of the sin-destroying power of the cross, and its assimilation by the believer, was the natural outgrowth of Paul's spiritual experience, and remained as the essential background of all his teaching. The further development of the doctrine in its bearing on the Law of Moses and the legalist attitude generally, took place through his conflict with the Judaizing principles of the early Christian community.

From the first Paul adopted a universal standpoint, and in preaching the Gospel of God's gracious work in Christ maintained that the sole condition of redemption was faith in the Redeemer, and acceptance of His indwelling Spirit. He did not indeed oppose the Law, but he ignored it, recognizing from his own painful experience that it was quite ineffectual for salvation. He was forced to go further and develop the implicates of his faith when the question was raised whether the Gentiles who believed were not bound to be circumcised and to adopt the Law of Moses. It had been hitherto assumed that the future Kingdom to be established would centre in the Jewish nation, and that Christ's salvation was only for Jews or for those who accepted the principles of Judaism. Paul's wider gospel was viewed with suspicion, and then openly controverted and opposed.

The question that thus arose was in Paul's eyes of vital moment. He had only to revert to his own experience to realize the broad gulf that separated life under the law from the new life made possible by the

[1] Rom. vi. 2–11; viii. 3–13.

redemption of Christ. To insist on obedience to the Levitical law was to accept the principles of legalism and return to the life of bondage and misery from which he had been saved. Accordingly, Paul proceeded to supplement his doctrine of redemption by setting in the forefront of his teaching that Christ came to redeem us not only from our sins, but also from the Law. He contends in the Epistle to the Galatians that Law and Gospel are absolutely opposed, and that his hearers must make their choice between them, while in the Epistle to the Romans he gives a clear and connected summary of his gospel of grace.

As Paul here teaches, the Christian redemption is equally necessary to Jew and Gentile—to those who have the Law and to those who have only the inner law of conscience to guide them. Both stand equally condemned; and both in conscience and in the Law the wrath of God reveals itself on a world that lies in wickedness, threatening it with universal destruction. Hitherto God has forborne to exercise His wrath: He has shown long-suffering to Israel, and has only punished the nations by leaving them to work out their own moral ruin. But now, in the very hour when the wrath of heaven is imminent, and no legal salvation is possible, a new righteousness of God is revealed in Christ, a righteousness which is without the law and higher than law and is secured by faith. This new justifying righteousness which delivers from the bondage of sin and makes new life possible has its source in the new attitude which God has taken to human sin, acting through the propitiating or cleansing virtue of the cross.[1] This deed of cleansing which reveals

[1] This passage, Rom. iii. 21–26, has been a battlefield of controversy, and the various theories of satisfaction have been read into it, according to the predilection of the interpreter. It should now be clear to the exegete that δικαιοσύνη is opposed to the wrath of God, or retributive justice. It means, as is evident from the context and from the O.T. usage of the term, the justifying righteousness of God: not that righteousness which punishes and destroys the sinner, but that quality in God which moves Him to justify or vindicate the sinner, and restore him to right relations with Himself. So the word ἱλαστήριον has not the traditional meaning which has been associated with "propitiation" or "atonement" or "expiation," but is connected through the Septuagint with the cathartic ritual of the Old Testament.

or demonstrates God's gracious justifying will sets aside the law's condemnation and issues in the justification of the believer. Elsewhere Paul argues that the cross breaks the dominion of sin; here he is interested to show that it makes an end of the law's condemnation. The believer who receives Christ and is one with Christ is justified, cleared, delivered from his bondage, set right with God. Under the law he was condemned by his own works; in Christ he is justified by faith, i.e., is forgiven, freed from the burden of his past sin, and enabled to start anew.[1]

But Paul is not content to argue that the cross is the overthrow of the law's condemnation; he goes on to show that the cross has abrogated the law, or brought it virtually to an end. As a system of ordinances accompanied by rewards and penalties, the Law had proved a failure in Paul's own experience, and on the basis of that experience he argues that while the Law was useful in its time as a stage in the Divine education, it is no longer valid for the sons of God in Christ Jesus. The cross has brought us freedom both from its condemnations and from its prescriptions. He expresses this fundamental principle in various ways. At one time he argues naïvely that since the Law is valid only for the living, it has no validity for the dead; and thus Christ's death has dissolved the connection with the law both for Him and for all who have died with Him. Or again, looking at the Law as a power of bondage over human life, he pictures Christ as entering our prison, submitting to its regulations, and bearing as a scapegoat our curse that we might be delivered from it. Or once more he includes the Law of ordinances among the evil powers of the present age, and declares roundly that Christ nailed it

[1] The old discussion as to whether "justify" means declare just, or make just, misses the real point of difficulty. If the term "just" means legally just, righteous before the law which judges of human actions, both definitions are erroneous; for the believer is not made at once righteous, nor can God pronounce him to be what he is not. But if "just" means "set right with God," both definitions are quite acceptable; for the believer who is justified is both set right, and pronounced to be set right, with God

to His cross and by dying triumphed over it.[1] Thus Paul's argument in regard to the Law's power follows on parallel lines his teaching as to the power of Sin. Both achieved their last triumph on the cross; and both were vanquished, made an end of, for all who have assimilated Christ.

Finally the victory over sin and the law logically involves the victory over death and all the evil powers that assail human life. Paul pictures death as a serpent whose sting is sin, and whose power is therefore broken when the sting is removed. Sin and death are inseparably united; for death is the wages of sin; and when the dominion of sin is removed the reign of death also comes to an end. The pledge of complete triunph is the resurrection of Christ, which brings to nought even the outward power of death. It goes without saying that the victory over sin and law and death is a victory over the demonic powers that have dominated the world hitherto; for these malicious beings who tempt to evil and draw men to their doom are simply the incarnation —or, as we should say, the personification of wickedness and all evil. Paul pictures these rulers of the present age as devising the death of Christ without suspecting that they were thus preparing their own ruin. Or again, he pictures Christ on the cross as divesting Himself of these evil powers, and displaying them as spoils in His triumph.[2] These are scarcely-veiled metaphors for the mysterious and amazing power of the cross, and the triumph there achieved over sin and law and death.

Thus the vicarious sacrifice of Christ is interpreted by Paul as the vicarious victory achieved by Him over the powers of Sin, Law and Death. The suffering on the cross is mystically conceived as a Divine achievement for human redemption. By assuming our sinful flesh, sharing our experience, and taking on Himself our inheritance of evil, He has faced and conquered all our foes and so opened up to men the Divine life of faith, righteousness and peace. Going down into the No Man's Land

[1] Rom. vii. 1–6; Gal. iii. 10–14, iv. 1–7; Col. ii. 14, 15.
[2] 1 Cor. ii. 8; Col. ii. 15.

where men lay bruised and dying and still exposed to the enemy's onslaught, He put the foe to flight, ransomed His followers from destruction and brought them back with Him victorious.

To the modern mind this ethical-mystical theory is too abstract to be quite satisfactory, and doubtless some re-interpretation will be found necessary. It remains true, however, that Paul interpreted the cross of Christ on the analogy of his own spiritual experience; his gospel of redemption simply objectifies that subjective experience. And, further, the objective redemption is never sundered by Paul from the subjective assimilation of Christ by the believer. These are not merely parallel facts, but they are logical implicates, related together as the universal form to its individual realization. The dying and resurrection of Christ are also experienced in the heart of believers, and Paul everywhere delights to use the language of mystic identification, and to identify faith with mystic union. By faith, i.e., in virtue of our being "in Christ," the believer has died and risen again; he is dead to the world's powers, to sin, law and death; he has broken their dominion and bondage and risen to new life in a higher sphere.

The question of the relation of Paul's ethical-mystical doctrine to the Greek mysteries and the parallel Oriental worships has opened up a new, and what promises to be a fruitful, field of inquiry.[1] The growth of these mystery religions presents something of the nature of a religious revival in the heathen world, and corresponds to some extent to the growth of Christianity and the deeper revival it produced. Many striking similarities have been noticed. There is the same universal standpoint, the dissociation of religion from nationality, the offer of salvation to all the initiated. There is the same emphasis on life, death, immortality, purification and new birth. The value placed on baptism, and the initiatory rites of

[1] Cumont's *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* is an admirable sketch of the subject, and gives many references. For a brief account of the mystery religions in relation to Paulinism, compare H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, and W. Morgan, *The Religion and Theology of Paul*, pp. 123–145.

partaking of the sacred cakes and the mystic drink, find new illustration in the sacramental and even magical rites that soon prevailed in the Christian Church. And—what is important in comparing the Pauline theology—there is the same concentration of thought on some Divine Being who has passed through death triumphantly, and the same conception of mystic union or identification with the dying and risen Lord. Though startling enough at first sight, such facts should be welcomed as throwing new light on the more mystical utterances of the Apostle. They show clearly that Christianity could adapt itself to the historical situation. It did not grow up *in vacuo*, but in close connection with world-wide aspirations and modes of thought. In particular, such facts prove conclusively that Paul was no exceptional and eccentric thinker whose mystic utterances demand a pathological explanation, but one whose interpretation of the gospel was well fitted to appeal to the more serious men of that Hellenistic age.

But while we recognize the profound similarity between the form of Paul's teaching and that of the pagan mystery religions, we must not close our eyes to the substantial contrasts. While the heathen mysteries centred in the worship of some Divine being—Attis, Cybele, Isis or Mithra—selected from mythology, Paul's gospel found its centre in the historical Jesus and the cross of Calvary. In the one case, the worship is addressed to some productive power of nature, and its main object is to secure an immortal life or the assurance of it; in the other it is the ethical and spiritual life that is concerned, and the end sought is the deliverance from sin and its condemnation. In the one we have what is perhaps the highest fruit of Nature religion; in the other the mystical is one with the ethical, and the love of God and man is the crowning result.

(C) The Epistle to the Hebrews and John's Gospel.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is an elaborate comparison of the Jewish ceremonial worship with the higher realities

of the Christian faith. It adopts a different attitude to the Jewish ritual from that taken by Paul. That apostle was still in the thick of the conflict with Judaism, when it was especially important to prove that the old law with its enactments and its threatenings was only of temporary significance. It seems highly probable that, at the time the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, the sharpness of conflict had passed, and Christianity was no longer in danger of subjection to the traditional forms of Judaism. The writer to the Hebrews now looks back on the old Jewish religion with a quiet historical interest, comparing it in its similarities and its contrasts with the newer faith; seeking both to estimate its historical value, and to set in relief over against it the higher truth of the Christian dispensation. He concedes willingly that the old religion of ritual and sacrifice had its truth, namely, as anticipative type and symbol of the fuller truth of the Christian Gospel. He even delights to turn back to the details of the old ceremonial system; while, as a Christian, he places over against the old background of foreshadowing ritual the eternal meaning of the sacrifice of Christ.

As is natural to one who is looking at the new faith in the light of the old, the author sets forth the redemptive work of Christ under the form of a High-priestly sacrifice. Jesus Christ is the great High Priest of our confession. The older priesthood belonged to a changing and temporary order; that of Christ is an eternal and unchanging priesthood. The older priesthood was based on birth and ritual regulation: Christ is the priest of unique Divine appointment. The older priests ministered in a visible sanctuary; Christ carries His ministering service into the true tabernacle of heaven itself, there to make continual intercession for His people. The earlier priests had to offer sacrifice for their own sins as well as for the congregation; Christ is the sinless, spotless High-priest. Other priests offered in sacrifice the blood of bulls and goats; Christ offered Himself. All these contrasts are summed up in the thought that the sacrifice of Christ is incomparably superior to the older sacrifices;

they were but the shadows, Christ's sacrifice is the substance. A similar contrast is seen in the effects produced in each case. The Jewish sacrifices could not really take away the sin of the worshippers; the very fact of their renewal year by year is cited as showing that the end desired and foreshadowed was never really attained. At most they gave levitical purity, sanctifying to the cleanness of the flesh; but only "the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God, could cleanse the conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (ix. 13, 14).

It does not occur to the writer of the Epistle to inquire into the meaning of sacrifice, whether in the Old Covenant or in the New; and we can only discover what was in his mind by considering what he says of the virtues or effects of the sacrifice. As we have seen, the result of the earlier sacrificial system was but an outward cleansing; the virtue of the sacrifice of Christ is that it cleanses inwardly. The writer, however, adds other statements, which help to expand his thought. Christ partook of our flesh and blood "that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage . . . to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (ii. 14–17). By His sacrifice He "obtained eternal redemption" (ix. 12); His blood avails to "cleanse the conscience" (ix. 14). He was once offered to "bear the sins of many," and "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (ix. 26, 28). The purpose of His sacrifice was to "make perfect them that draw nigh," that they might be "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (x. 1, 10). The main doctrine of the writer is plain: Christ's sacrifice on the cross avails for the putting away of sin, for the cleansing and inward perfecting of believers. The writer, however, also notes the value of Christ's death even for Himself. "It became Him [God] to make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering" (ii. 10); for "though he was a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things he suffered; and having been made perfect he

became to all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (v. 8, 9). These expressions cover the ground of the writer's thought of Christ's sacrifice; and we sum them together when we say that it availed, first, for Himself, to perfect Him as the author of our salvation, and secondly, for His people, purifying, cleansing and sanctifying them, and so giving them permanent access to the heavenly world.

It is evident that the writer of this Epistle gives us no definite theology of the cross, and that his purpose is merely to place the sacrifice of Christ side by side with the customary sacrifices of Judaism in order to set in relief its superiority. For if we ask: Why must Christ suffer death in order to cleanse His people from sin and dead works? the writer is content to refer us back to the customary conception of the old ritual, according to which "there is no remission without shedding of blood" (ix. 22). Or if we ask again: How does the death of Christ secure these ends? we get no other answer than that Christian experience is sufficient evidence that it has secured them. We can hardly suppose that the phrase, once employed, of Christ's "conquest over him who has the power of death, that is, the devil," is more than a vivid expression of the truth on which the writer insists elsewhere, that the sacrifice of the cross has availed to put away sin, to secure pardon, cleansing and sanctification, and so to deliver from the bondage of sin and death. The phrase is only noteworthy because it served to suggest to later Christian thought the conception of a literal conflict with Satan, and even of a bargain with him for the souls of men.

The Gospel of John marks a new starting-point for Christian thought, venturing as it does into the highest regions of speculation, and boldly relating the Christian faith to the profound conclusions of contemporary philosophy. The Gospel is doubtless more than philosophy; it is no mere search for intellectual satisfaction, but is pervaded throughout by an intense religious interest. But it is going to the other extreme to affirm

that the Gospel merely borrows the language and outward expression from its intellectual environment, and that the substance of the faith is quite unaffected by the philosophical dress in which it has been partly clothed. Assuredly the work is written by one of high speculative grasp; and it appeals, and has in all ages appealed, to the intellectual mind.

It is quite in accordance with the comprehensive philosophical standpoint of the writer that he should interpret the redeeming work of Jesus by the central thought which for him is both intellectual principle and saving truth; namely, that in Jesus the Divine Logos became flesh and dwelt among us. In the very descent of the Eternal Word he sees the coming of the Divine life to men, and so their salvation. For salvation means the possession of eternal life; and to come into living contact with him who brings it direct from God is to attain it. In the very incarnation, and the manifestation of the Divine life to men, the process of redemption is already being realized. Christ is the realized Word of the Father, and directly transmits the Divine life to all who see and believe. He is the bread of life sent down from heaven; and those who appropriate Him by eating His flesh and drinking His blood enter into possession of the same spiritual and eternal life.

This dominating conception, of Jesus as the revealer and transmitter of Divine life, has room within it for many other points of view; for the manifestation of the Divine in Jesus is actualized in a genuinely human life, which comes into touch with the sin of the world. John lays emphasis on the death of Jesus as the necessary culmination of his mission of mediation. We may here gather together the directly relevant passages; for we must view them as a whole in order to get a concrete impression of his teaching. First comes the saying ascribed to John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away (or beareth) the sin of the world" (i. 29). In all probability these words are no *ipsissima verba* of the Baptist, but rather give the interpretation put on John's whole ministry by the author of the Gospel,

who regards the work of the stern preacher of righteousness as a substantial preparation for One whose life is to be dedicated to the redemption of the world, and its deliverance from the power of sin. Then we find such expressions as these: "The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world" (vi. 51). "The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep" (x. 11). "I lay down my life freely" (x. 18). "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (xii. 24). "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (xii. 32). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (xv. 13). "For their sake I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth" (xvii. 19). Here we find various appreciations of Christ's death, which are in full harmony with the main thought of the Gospel, as well as with Christ's own teaching in the other Gospels. Christ comes to the world, bearing the life eternal; and His death is conceived as a natural condition for the fruition of His work, for the full transmission of the gift He brings to men. The entire thought is that of a continuous unselfish ministration, the giving of Himself in life and in death for the good of His people.

Throughout this Gospel the death of Christ is conceived as in harmony with the rest of His earthly ministry; it is the consummation of His willing surrender to the Father's will in the execution of His redeeming mission. It is no mere matter of historical necessity. There is also a Divine necessity for it; the Son of Man "must be lifted up," for the full fruition of his task, which is to "draw all men unto him." This necessity is further illuminated by the saying, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." In other words, Christ's death is in accordance with a principle that is seen universally in nature's processes—the principle that all multiplication of life takes place by the surrender of the seed's life; it illustrates the wider law that all higher gain comes through sacrifice, conquest through suffering, life

through death. It is in accordance with this law that Christ's death is necessary to secure the full impartation of His life to men. It is true that in His prayer of intercession, before the sacrifice on the cross was accomplished, Christ spoke as though He had already "finished the work given him to do" (xvii. 4). The difficulty that might be raised here by a too logical precision is removed if we regard the near approaching surrender as included by anticipation in the work to which Christ refers. It must be allowed, however, that the saying would be less readily intelligible, had John conceived of Christ's death as having an essentially different significance from the life-work already accomplished. The natural conclusion is that Christ's death is understood as the carrying to completion of the work already achieved. The sacrifice of the cross is the continuation, the culmination of that involved in the incarnation, and in all the activities of Christ's earthly ministry; necessary, as all else in Christ's ministering mission was in its own degree necessary, for the full manifestation of the Divine life and its complete communication to men.

It cannot be said, however, that our Gospel advances to explain the manner in which Christ's death secures these ends. John does, it is true, throw some sidelight on this question; as when he indicates that Christ's followers would profit by the withdrawal of His bodily presence, by being led to a more spiritual and in reality more unrestricted fellowship with Him, and to a fuller unity with one another.[1] But on the main issue John does not explain further than we have indicated *how* the humiliation, suffering and agony of the cross availed to secure to men the blessings of Divine life. He is apparently content to point to the law of spiritual progress as showing that such an issue to Christ's mission was Divinely necessary, and to the actual abounding life of Christ's community as evidence of its blessed operation.

[1] These subsidiary explanations are set forth by Prof. E. Scott (*The Fourth Gospel*, p. 228), whose illuminating chapter on Christ's work is well worthy of study.

CHAPTER V

REDEMPTION IN THE GREEK-CHRISTIAN CHURCH

In the earlier post-apostolic Church there is remarkably little elaboration of the doctrine of redemption. The bishops and apologists of the first two centuries had more pressing interests to serve. In those days of opposition and persecution they had to vindicate the moral character of the Christian community against false accusation; they had to console their sorely persecuted flocks and to strengthen faith in the heavenly inheritance which awaited those who suffered death for Christ's sake. When they allude to the sufferings and death of Christ, it is with the same practical purpose as pervades the later epistles of the New Testament. In order to inspire their readers with patient endurance and steadfast hope they point to the cross as the supreme example of patience, self-denial and all-surrendering love.[1] They assume that the death of Christ was a vicarious sacrifice, that He bore our sins and died for our salvation; but for the most part they conceive of salvation as a blessing of the future, to be realized at the second coming of the Lord; and the death of Christ is regarded as the power that leads men to repentance and obedience to the new Divine law by which they are to be judged.

Moreover, when the Christian Church sets itself definitely to theologize and systematize its faith, the problem with which it mainly deals is the coming of the incarnate Logos and the wide significance of that transcendent fact. Thus

[1] Cp. Polycarp, *Epistle to Philippians*, section 8; Ignatius, *Epistle to Romans*, section 6; Clement of Rome, *First Epistle*, section 49.

when Origen undertakes the first systematic treatment of Christian doctrine, he dwells at length on Christ's person and incarnation, on the Holy Spirit and inspiration, on beings corporeal and incorporeal, on liberty and the fall of man, and on the beginning and end of the world; but nowhere does he deal specifically with the death of Christ and its significance for the world's salvation. Only here and there in his commentaries do we find any special reference to the cross and its healing and ransoming power. The same is true of the theology of the Greek Church as a whole. The dogmatic controversies which raged for centuries and the creeds of the great Church Councils deal almost exclusively with the person of Christ, the relation of the Logos incarnate to God the Father, or the nature of the union of Christ's humanity with His Divinity.

The explanation of this apparent one-sidedness of thought is not far to seek. It was not simply that the metaphysical question was more attractive to a Greek mind, but that the Incarnation was regarded as directly significant for human salvation. The very coming of Christ from heaven to earth—the amazing gospel that He, the incarnate Logos, had entered the darkness and corruption of our human life in order to reveal and impart the Divine life—this was preached as the great redemptive fact. The general thesis of these centuries, which germinated in the Fourth Gospel and the teaching of Justin Martyr, and prevailed from the time of Irenæus onward, was that in Christ God had entered humanity in order that man might rise to God. As Athanasius boldly expressed it, "God became man in Christ, in order that man might become God."[1] This constitutes the underlying principle of Greek theology, and all the aspects of Christ's life, His birth, teaching, miracles, sufferings, death and resurrection, are interpreted in harmony with this basic point of view. The unique emphasis which Paul placed on the death of Christ was set aside or merged in the wider Johannine thought that the entire life of Jesus

[1] *On the Incarnation*, chap. 54; cp. Irenæus, *Heresies*, Bk. III, chap. 20, and IV, chap. 75.

had redemptive meaning. It was not denied that the various aspects of Christ's ministry had their special value, but all were interpreted in the light of the one central principle, and as aspects of a single redemptive process.[1]

The special references to Christ's death are all moulded by this dominating thought. The virtue of His saving presence and ransoming power is conceived to be concentrated in the cross. It is universally taught that Christ came to conquer our enemies, sin, ignorance and death, and open the way to eternal life. These evils are conceived in varying fashion. Now they are pictured as diseases from which humanity needs to be cured: now, more psychologically, as evil powers within man which need to be extirpated; and again as due to hostile evil spirits which tempt man and hold him in bondage. And similarly the work of Christ is variously presented, now as a Divine medicine for the cure of our fallen nature, now as a Divine persuasive power leading to repentance and faith, and now as a victory over the demonic powers.

We may illustrate the main lines of the Greek doctrine under three heads, according as the cross is conceived as a victory over sin, or a means of ransom from the demons, or a triumph over the power of death.

(*a*) Christ's death is presented as the culmination of His victory over sin. Sin is a power universally prevalent, and Christ is pictured as the Captain of salvation who has taken command of the defeated forces of humanity, and, assuming our flesh and our evil lot, has vanquished sin in its own realm. It is not merely that Christ has broken sin's universal dominion by His personal steadfastness and righteousness in the hour of sorest trial: but His

[1] The Greek doctrine of redemption is really a blending of Johannine and Pauline theology. The thought of a redemptive process as involved in the incarnation of the Logos carries out the central position of John's Gospel; but the more concrete explanation of Christ's work as a victory over sin, Satan and death is simply a further elaboration of Paul's doctrine of the cross. On the other hand, the doctrine that Christ's death was also a victory over the Law and legalism was forgotten in its deeper aspect of meaning, and accepted only in the diluted sense that Christ's sacrifice makes an end of all Jewish sacrifices and ceremonies. This neglect had serious consequences, especially in later Western theology.

victory is also a victory for humanity. As Irenæus puts it, Christ is the new head of humanity and by His perfect obedience has rescinded man's disobedience and reinstated the image of God in man.[1] Or as Cyril of Jerusalem teaches, Christ bore the sins of men in His body on the tree, so that the death of His flesh carried with it the death of sin.[2] Or again, more generally, sin is pictured as an almost incurable disease, and Christ as the Divine healer who comes and gives Himself for man's cleansing and cure. His presence in human flesh and His coming in contact with human sin and evil form an immediate cure; the Divine righteousness banishes the disease of sin, and the Divine light expels the darkness of sin. So Origen speaks of the death of Christ as "a kind of medicine against sin" for those who open their minds to the truth, and as a healing power that flows over the souls of believers and makes an end of weakness.[3] This view of Christ's curative virtue is quaintly expressed in a homily of the fourth century. "Just as the woman who was diseased with an issue of blood had spent all she had on those who promised to heal her, and yet was cured of none, till she came to the Lord in true faith and touched His hem, and thus was sensible that she was healed and her flow of blood stopped—so with the soul wounded with the incurable wound of sinful affections, which none of the righteous, neither the fathers nor the prophets and patriarchs were able to cure. Moses came, but was not able to give perfect health. The priestly duties, the gifts, tithes, sabbaths, new moons, washings, sacrifices, whole burnt-offerings and every other branch of righteousness, were observed under the Law. And yet the soul could not be healed and cleansed from the impure fountain of sinful thoughts, neither could all its righteousness avail anything towards its healing—till such time as the Saviour Himself came, the true Physician, who healeth

[1] *Heresies*, Bk. III, chaps. 18–22.

[2] Cp. *Catechetical Lectures*, xiii. 28: "He stretched forth human hands . . . and they were fastened with nails; so that when His manhood, which bore the sins of men, was nailed to the tree and died, sin might die with it and we might rise again in righteousness."

[3] *Commentary on John*, i, 37, 38.

freely and gave Himself a ransom for the race of mankind. He alone wrought the great saving redemption and cure of the soul. He it was who set it free from the state of bondage and brought it out of darkness and glorified it with His own light. He has in truth dried up the fountain of unclean thoughts; for 'behold,' saith the Scripture, 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'"[1]

(*b*) Another view of Christ's redemptive work presents it in objective fashion as a victory over Satan and the invisible demonic powers. Here the poison of sin is realistically conceived as an enslavement to the Powers of evil, who have invaded, tempted and conquered man's soul; and Christ is presented as the great Deliverer who has taken captivity captive and ransomed the soul from its enemies. The elaboration of this conception met the popular need of a pictorial explanation of Christ's ransoming work; and from Justin Martyr onward the religious imagination seized upon it and presented it in a great variety of forms. Though somewhat held in check by the rational desire to control the imagery and re-translate it into terms of spiritual experience, the need of visualizing spiritual truth often prevailed over reason and was carried to extravagant lengths.

Neither Justin Martyr nor Clement of Alexandria nor Irenæus can be said to pass beyond the bounds of a sober and reasonable imagination. Christ's work is conceived as a victorious conflict with Satan or the demons, and his sufferings are but the scars of the conflict. Thus Irenæus pictures the whole of Christ's ministry as a conflict with the evil power that holds man in bondage. The story of the Temptation in the wilderness portrays the first notable encounter; for there Christ repelled the wiles of the evil one, and so far diminished his power. The decisive conflict took place on the cross, where Christ, while Himself wounded in the heel, crushed the head of the serpent. This triumph over Satan on the cross is interpreted in this sense that Christ remained there steadfast in righteousness and obedience, and so, cancelling man's

[1] *Homilies of Macarius*, 20.

disobedience, became the head of a new humanity free from Satan's sway.[1] One can easily trace behind the imagery of man's bondage to Satan the deep conviction of the power of sin and man's need of redemption from it. And the death of Christ is really for Irenæus a victory over sin in so far as it has introduced into human experience an obedience which reverses man's disobedience, and a Divine life which cancels, for all who share in His fellowship, the fatal inheritance of Adam.

Origen, the philosophical theologian of Alexandria, advances further in the use of this kind of imagery. He often depicts the death of Christ as a victory over the hostile powers, in which their venom is exhausted or their power to tempt man is reduced to impotence. He illustrates his meaning by comparing the virtue of Christ's death with that of the Christian martyrs. "We are led to believe that the powers of evil suffer defeat by the death of the holy martyrs. It is as if their patience, their confession maintained even to death, and their pious zeal, blunted the edge of the onslaught of evil powers against the sufferer; and, their might being thus dulled and exhausted, many other victims have raised their heads and been released from the weight with which the evil powers formerly oppressed and injured them."[2] But in order to set in clearer relief the virtue of Christ's suffering as such, he proceeds to develop the conception of the ransom price. Since Satan had acquired a certain right over man by reason of his sin, Christ offered His blood as the price of the souls of men. "To whom did He pay His life as a ransom for many? Not to God, assuredly, but to the Evil One. For the Evil One held us in his power, till the life of Christ was given him as the ransom for us." He received it under a misapprehension, believing he could retain it.[3] Thus by His death Christ has paid the ransom to Satan and set man free; while again by His resurrection, robbing death of his prey, He has brought Satan's power entirely to an end.

Of course this fanciful piece of imagery belongs only to

[1] *Heresies*, Bk. III, chaps. 18, 21. [2] *Commentary on John*, vi. 36.
[3] *Commentary on Matthew*, xvi. 8.

the periphery of Origen's thought and has no fundamental place in his theology. When we consider that for Origen the great redemptive fact is the coming of the Divine Logos into human life for its illumination and regeneration, and that such fancies as a ransom to Satan and a deceptive bargain have no place in his theological *principles*, we seem entitled to conclude that the imagery is but a metaphor for the moral triumph which Christ has achieved over the sin and evil that oppress humanity.

Later theologians illustrate the significance of the cross by various modifications of the same thought. Gregory of Nyssa accepts the thought of an agreement with the enemy of man. Christ did not ransom men by sheer violence from the master who had legally purchased them, but offered His own flesh in exchange. Clothing His Divinity in human form so that Satan might not be afraid to accept the bait, He effected the ransom of those formerly enslaved. Gregory defends as entirely just the deception practised on one who had himself deceived mankind, and he humorously pictures Satan as a fish caught by the bait of Christ's humanity and left hanging on the hook of His divinity.[1] Others repudiated the thought of any contract or of any right on Satan's part and returned to the simpler view of a destruction of Satan's power; while others again admitted that Satan had a certain right over the slaves of sin, but held that he was justly called to repair the grievous wrong of Christ's crucifixion by releasing those he had enslaved. So Augustine; and similarly Macarius: "In the dead body of Christ there is life and redemption. For here the Lord comes to Death, and disputes with him, expressly commanding him to release the souls in hell and death, and restore them to Him. Disturbed by these demands, Death goes in to his servants, and musters all his forces. The Prince of Wickedness brings to Christ the handwriting and says: 'See how these men have surrendered to me and worshipped me.' But the Divine One who judges righteously even now displays His righteousness,

[1] *Great Catechism*, chaps. 22–26. The grotesque metaphor was popular both in the Greek Church and in the Middle Ages.

and answers him: 'It is true that Adam surrendered to you, and you have had the hearts of all the sons of Adam in your possession. But what doth *My* body do here? It is assuredly free from sin. That body of the first Adam is rightfully yours, and you are entitled to keep these writings in your possession. But I, the Son of God, have not sinned, as all with one accord bear witness; and you yourself, Satan, bore witness to Me when you cried out, "I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God" . . . I therefore redeem that body which was sold to thee by the first Adam. I cancel your writing by being crucified and descending to hell. And I command you, Hell, Darkness and Death, release all of you the souls you have held in prison.' Then the wicked Powers are moved with terrible fear, and straightway surrender the Adam whom they had held in bondage."[1] On the whole, the very modifications of the imagery indicate a more or less conscious use of metaphor; and the only difference is that some hold more closely than others to the shores of spiritual experience and historical fact. The victory over Satan on the cross is the victory won by Christ over the sin and darkness of human life—a victory to be repeated in every believing soul.

(*c*) A third view frequently emphasized is that Christ by His death has triumphed over Death and enabled man to attain to immortality. Redemption is more than deliverance from the power of sin and Satan; it is also deliverance from the corruption of death. Man was at the beginning capable of immortality; but he has forfeited the gift by sin, and become liable to corruption. The coming of the incarnate Logos has for its end to restore to man this lost essential quality of Divine life. Uniting in Himself the Divine immortal nature with our human nature, Christ is able to cure man of his corruption and make him partaker of the immortal life of God. For, says Irenæus, "we could not gain incorruption and immortality, unless incorruption and immortality became what we are, so that what is corruptible might be absorbed by incorruption, and what is mortal absorbed by

[1] *Homilies*, xi.

immortality, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "By His passion our Lord has destroyed death, has exterminated corruption, and dissolved error and ignorance; and, on the other hand, He has manifested life, has revealed truth, and bestowed incorruption."[1] Here we have not only the general principle asserted that Christ by His incarnation has infused the Divine immortal nature into our humanity, but also the more concrete reference to Christ's death as that through which death is vanquished and immortality restored. On the cross the Divine life comes into conflict with death, absorbing and vanquishing it. And what has been thus secured for human nature as a whole is secured —potentially—for each individual. The infusion of immortal life is realized effectually in those who hear Christ's words and do His works and enter into the fellowship of His spirit.

In similar fashion Athanasius deals with the significance of the incarnation, and the ends achieved by Christ's death. Man by his sin has forfeited the Divine eternal life, and become in consequence, and by the express judgment of God, subject to mortality. But if mankind perish, what becomes of the good purpose of God? It would not be worthy of God, but proof of weakness, if He allowed His work to be ruined and the world to waste away. Here then was a dilemma: according to the judgment pronounced on disobedience man must die, and yet, on the other hand, the universal perdition of God's creatures would be unworthy of God. Might the curse be removed and God's judgment reversed by a word of forgiveness? God, he answers, could certainly have withdrawn the curse, but His consistency might then be questioned; and in any case we have to consider not an abstract possibility, but what was most expedient for man. Now a mere word of forgiveness might have removed the curse, but it would not have changed human nature. "If God had merely spoken, since that was in His power, and so the curse had been undone, He who gave the word would have shown His power. But man, though restored

[1] Cp. *Neresies*, Bk. III, chap. 19; Bk. II, chap. 20.

to what Adam was before the transgression, would have received the grace only from without, and not as united to the body. He would have been as Adam was when first placed in Paradise; or rather, perhaps, he would have become worse, since he had now learned to transgress. And such being his condition, if he were again seduced by the serpent, there would be fresh occasion for God to give command and undo the curse; and so the need would become interminable. Men would remain thus under guilt no less than before; and ever sinning and ever needing pardon, would never become free."[1] Or again, would man's own repentance suffice to cancel the past disobedience and stay the tide of corruption? But apart from the difficulty of God's consistency if He simply retracted His pronouncement of death, repentance fails to meet the situation, because it is powerless to stay natural corruption. Repentance can check actual sinning, but it cannot renew our nature and give us immortality. "Were it simply a question of the offence, and not of the consequent corruption, repentance might be in order. But if, when sin had once gained a start, men were involved in natural corruption and deprived of the grace of the God-like nature, what further step was needed? What was requisite for such grace and renewal but the Logos of God, who had also at the beginning made all things out of nothing? It rested with Him once more to bring back the corruptible to incorruption, and also to safeguard in every way the consistency of the Father."[2] So Athanasius insists that the Incarnation of the Divine Logos, and, as subordinate to that, His death, are the appropriate and necessary means for bringing to humanity a regenerated and immortal nature. On the cross Christ submitted to the curse of death pronounced on sin, paying the debt in our nature and in our stead; but He also faced and destroyed death by the power of His own incorruptible life, and thus restored to man the Divine immortal nature.

Thus the more detailed explanations of Christ's redemp-

[1] *Against the Arians*, ii. 68. [2] *The Incarnation*, vii.

tive work harmonize with the main thesis that He is the Divine life actualized in humanity; they are little more than "specifications," as Ritschl says, of this fundamental conception. Christ stands now as the Divine Righteousness, who intervenes in this sinful world, reverses the current of moral corruption, and by His death cancels man's disobedience, radiates new moral power and weans the soul from sin: now as the conqueror over the hostile powers, dissipating their influence by His Divine truth, repairing their ravages on the body by His healing ministry, proving their impotence by His unfailing obedience to the Father's will, and triumphing over them in His death, which is their crowning defeat; and again He is represented as the Lord of Life, curing by His touch the maimed and diseased, and calling dead souls from the tomb; and finally in His death vanquishing death by His exhaustless life, and rising visibly victorious over it in the resurrection. All such conceptions are clearly an elaboration, carried out with all the ingenuity of the Greek mind, of the common Christian faith from the beginning that Christ is the Life and Light of men, and his cross the Divine power to redeem them from sin and death and every evil power.

This theology of redemption is true to its Christian origin in so far as it centres round an historical fact—the fact of Christ—and its ethical significance for the restoration and transformation of human life. It builds on the essential contrast between sin and righteousness, not on any opposition between the Divine and the world of matter; and neither loses itself in the sands of asceticism nor soars into the clouds of metaphysical abstraction. It thus stands widely apart from the fanciful mythologies of Gnostic sects and from the equally insubstantial constructions of Neo-Platonism—"that splendid vision of incomparable and irrecoverable cloudland in which the sun of Greek philosophy set."[1]

Yet the Greek theology was seriously affected by the Greek moulds in which it was cast. While warm with the glow of religious faith, the interpretation of Christ's

[1] Hatch.

redemptive work is clothed in forms which are all too abstract and figurative.

This is strikingly evident in those phases of doctrine which represent Christ's work as a triumph over Satan's power or a ransom-price paid to the devil for man's soul. The more vivid and detailed the picture, the more surely does the mind perceive that it is but an allegory, and cast about for a serious re-interpretation. It is doubtful indeed whether the more developed forms of the theory —those which involved the deception of Satan or the payment of a ransom to him—were literally acceptable to the Greek mind. They are frequently challenged by individual theologians[1]; and even those who accept the imagery often re-interpret it in more concrete terms. We may conclude that such conceptions, while freely used in rhetorical preaching, were for the most part only a popular way of presenting the doctrine that Christ by his incarnation and his ministry in life and death has conquered in our human nature the forces of sin and evil.

But our criticism must extend to the other phases of doctrine. The basal conception was that the Divine Logos, by assuming our human nature, infused the Divine life into humanity, cleansing it of the poison of sin and corruption. If we interpret this to mean—as the abstract form suggests—that by the union of Divinity with humanity Christ has deified our human nature, the criticism is at once relevant that such a statement is an empty abstraction, taking account neither of the real redemptive factors of Christ's life and death nor of the concrete process of redemption in the lives of men. Or if we regard it more sympathetically as a comprehensive, if abstract, statement of the concrete redemptive forces operating in human lives, it is still open to the objection that it fails to make these processes a whit more intelligible, and that by its universal reference to man-

[1] Notably by Gregory Nazianzen (*Orations*, xlv. 22), followed by John of Damascus (*The Orthodox Faith*, xxvii). According to Gregory the ransom of Christ's death was not offered to "the robber," but rather to God Himself; not that God asked or demanded it or delighted in the blood of His Son, but in order that Christ by dying might sanctify humanity and overthrow the tyrant.

kind it stands in contradiction to the facts of experience.[1]

A similarly fatal abstractness attaches to most of the special conceptions which present Christ as the conqueror over Sin and Death. When one attempts to put into concrete language the assertions that Christ has vanquished sin, extracted its poison or destroyed its power, or that by dying He has destroyed death, the lack of determinate meaning soon becomes apparent. No doubt for the Greek mind such statements were sufficiently concrete, because "Sin," "Death," "Life," "Human Nature" were so many definite and objective realities. For us who are no longer Platonists, these are only generic names or personifications; and we have to re-interpret them in the light of concrete, individual facts and persons. Our problem is not Sin, but sinners; and Human Nature is nothing apart from human individuals. While believing that Christ has brought to bear on human life a power that lifts it into harmony with the Divine, we desire to comprehend the mediating processes; and we cannot be satisfied with pictures which, if they mean anything at all, are over-statements of truth and do not tally with the experience of sinful and sorrowful men. One turns with a certain relief to the theology of the Latin Church, in which we pass from the rarefied atmosphere of abstract truth into a world of concrete reality.

[1] Only individual theologians like Origen accept the thought of Christ's work as involving a universal redemption. Referring to the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," Origen remarks, "His taking away sin is still going on. He is taking it away for every individual in the world, till, after taking it away entirely, the Saviour will deliver the Kingdom as prepared and perfected to the Father—a Kingdom in which no sin is left at all" (*Commentary on John*, i. 37).

CHAPTER VI

REDEMPTION IN EARLY WESTERN THEOLOGY

As we pass to the great teachers of the early Church in the West, such as Tertullian and Cyprian, Hilary, Ambrose and Augustine, we find ourselves in a new theological atmosphere. The spirit of ancient Rome lives again in the Latin Church. This is seen in the talent for practical administration, the insistence upon authority and discipline, and the disposition to weigh truth by its experienced value. The dominant thought of the Greek Church, that the Divine Logos came to redeem human nature by assuming our flesh and triumphing for us over Sin, Satan and Death, fell gradually into the background. The speculative and mystic side of religious thought yielded to a more pragmatic interest which made the experience of sin and grace the starting-point and centre of theological study. Thus in the interpretation of Christ's redeeming work it was no longer the Incarnation that occupied the foreground of thought, but rather the redeeming achievement of Christ's human work. Further, it was in the Western Church that the view of Christ's death as an atonement offered to God came to be increasingly emphasized, until with Anselm it overshadowed every other standpoint.[1]

In this early period of the Latin Church—say from Tertullian to Augustine—it is impossible to discover any single comprehensive view of redemption. The Greek standpoint still largely prevails, and all the theories

[1] Ritschl declares roundly that the notions of legal atonement and justification are the property of the Western Church, and were practically unknown in Greek theology (*Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung.* i. p. 3).

already mentioned find a parallel in the writings of Western theologians. But from the beginning one may also trace certain anticipations of the later legal standpoint in the prevalence of such expressions as "merit," "satisfaction," "conciliating God," "placating God." These terms were first applied by Tertullian and Cyprian, not to the work of Christ, but to the good works of the Christian, who by his prayer and fasting and alms, or by his contrition for sin and deeds of penance, satisfies God and merits His favour. The Church's penitential system was based on the conception that by public confession and works of penance and satisfaction the sinner was able to conciliate God and merit His blessing; and when such a nomistic conception was applied to Christ's work on man's behalf it gave rise to the ideas of vicarious merit, atonement and satisfaction. In fact, the Latin theology, while still regarding the vicarious sacrifice in Greek fashion as a direct redemptive achievement, a direct victory over sin and Satan, begins to introduce a new constituting factor in the conception of Christ's death as a ransom offered to God, an atoning sacrifice which cancels guilt and removes the Divine wrath.

We may take AUGUSTINE as representing this period of transition in Latin theology. It is vain to seek in his writings for any complete and consistent doctrine of redemption; for in his broad and receptive mind the lines of thought cross and recross, according as he is moved by some favourite thought of his own or by some statement of Scripture or of tradition. But one great note of his gospel of redemption is the thought of the amazing condescendence of God's grace, and the conjoined psychological principle that as sin centres in human pride, salvation comes with the entrance of humility. His own conversion-experience is here the controlling factor of his faith. He confesses that so long as he was immersed in heathen philosophy he was repelled by the Christian thought of God assuming flesh and clothing Himself with the lowly body of Jesus; and he tells how later he was enabled to surrender his pride and to find his salvation and blessedness in what he had formerly

despised. For a long time he was mastered by the proud spirit of ancient philosophy, which had no comprehension for the humble life of faith, begotten by the grace of Christ. He indulged in scorn of the gospel and was puffed up with vain knowledge. Only gradually did the amazing humility of Christ arrest him, and "sink wonderfully into his soul."[1]

This principle of the Divine condescending and all-conquering grace helped to mould Augustine's theory of redemption, though his thought still moves largely on traditional lines. He loves to picture Christ's work as the medicine of the diseased soul; and he elaborates with ingenious detail the remedies applied by the great Physician, showing how, on the analogy of the various medical appliances, homeopathic and allopathic, the Incarnate Wisdom applies various cures to those who are wounded by pride and sin. "Just as he who ministers to a bodily hurt applies contraries, as cold to hot or moist to dry, and in other cases applies . . . like to like; in the same way the Wisdom of God in healing man has applied Himself to his cure, being Himself healer and medicine both in one. Seeing then that man fell through pride, He restored him through humility. We were ensnared by the wisdom of the serpent; we are set free by the foolishness of God. Just as the former is called wisdom, but is in reality the folly of those who despise God; so the latter is called foolishness, but is true wisdom in those who overcome the evil one. Again, we used our immortality so badly as to incur the penalty of death; Christ used His mortality so well that He restored us to life. So, the disease was introduced through a woman's corrupted soul; the remedy came through a woman's virgin body. To the same class of opposite remedies it belongs that our vices are cured by the example of His virtues. On the other hand, the following are, as it were, bandages made to conform to the limbs and the wounds to which they are applied. Christ was born of a woman to deliver us who fell through a woman. He came as a man to save us who are men; as a mortal to save us who

[1] *Confessions*, Book VII.

are mortals; by death to save those who were dead."[1] This conception of the medicine of grace is common in early Greek-Christian thought; but it is also in line with Augustine's conception of man's hopeless and helpless spiritual state and his entire passivity in the work of salvation. Augustine's "likes" and "opposites" are somewhat artificial, and due to the arbitrary play of fancy; one cannot help comparing them with the profounder parallelisms and contrasts noted by the Apostle Paul. Yet they serve for Augustine to mark the heights and depths of redemptive experience, and to show how Christ's work is in various ways appropriate to the end sought, the restoration of the human soul.

A second conception, which is also presented at great length, and stands in close connection with the first, is that Christ came to deliver men from Satan's power. From the special form given to this traditional theory, it appears that Augustine's mind is moving towards another conception of Christ's death, namely that of a sacrifice offered to God to satisfy and remove the Divine condemnation. The idea of a ransom paid to Satan and that of a ransom paid to God are scarcely reconcilable; but Augustine evidently strives to bring them into harmony. While accepting the crude conception of the Greek theology, he seeks to adjust it to the thought of vicarious suffering as a satisfaction to God, which was beginning to prevail in the theology of the West.

Augustine contrasts Satan, the "mediator unto death," with Christ as our mediator unto life, who came to undo the work of Satan and lead men back to life and blessedness. The devil had brought man through pride to the double death of soul and body; having first won his soul, he gained a quasi-right over his future destiny. That is to say, it was in the justice of God that we were handed over to Satan's power: our captivity under Satan is just, on account of our sin. Now Christ came to free us from Satan's power. Already in the wilderness He offered Himself to Satan's temptation, that He might show how his power may be foiled by righteousness.

[1] *Christian Doctrine*, i. 14.

Thereafter the devil set himself eagerly to compass Christ's death; and he was permitted by God to achieve his purpose. But in that very achievement he was again foiled, for his outward triumph was disastrous to his claim over the souls and bodies of men. "For since by Christ's death the one and most true sacrifice was offered up for us, whatever fault there was by which the principalities and powers held us fast, as of right, till its penalty was paid, He cleansed, abolished, extinguished. . . . And so the devil in that very death of Christ's flesh, lost man who had been seduced by his own consent, and whom Satan held as by an absolute right. . . . The Lord yielded to him so that, being put to death though innocent, He might by a most just right overcome him, and lead captive the captivity wrought through sin and which was just on account of sin; blotting out the handwriting and redeeming us who though sinners were to be justified through His own righteous blood unrighteously poured out."[1] Or, as he puts it again, Christ conquered the devil first by righteousness and afterwards by power. By righteousness, because having been slain unjustly, He was entitled to claim for His followers a free discharge; and then by power, because He escaped from death by rising again to live for evermore. But Augustine insists the important aspect is the first, that Christ conquered Satan on the cross by righteousness. "It is not difficult to see that the devil was conquered when He who was slain by him rose again from the dead. It is something more, and a matter of deeper significance, to see that the devil was conquered when he thought to have triumphed, at the very moment when Christ was slain. For then that blood, belonging to One who had no sin, was poured out for the remission of our sins; in order that the devil, who deservedly held sinners bound under condition of death, might now deservedly loose them through Him who was innocent and undeservedly underwent the punishment of death." Thus "He discharged our sins, who had none of His own, but was led to death by Satan unjustly. That blood was of such price, that he who slew Christ for

[1] *Trinity*, Book IV. ch. xvii.

the time by a death that was not due, can no longer hold justly as debtors those who have put on Christ."[1]

In these carefully worded statements the legal element in the transaction with Satan is unusually prominent. The ransom from Satan is secured by a balancing of right and wrong: the right of Satan to hold man in bondage is based on the wrong done by man in yielding to his seduction, and is cancelled again by the wrong which Satan committed in putting Christ to death. Further, it is evident that Augustine is looking beyond the metaphor to the spiritual facts; and his modification of the traditional figure prepares the way for another conception of the significance of the cross. Thus the devil's right of dominion over sinful man becomes simply a figurative expression of the truth that man deserves death because death is the wages of sin. And the inner meaning of the ransom exacted by Satan lies, for Augustine, not merely in the thought that death was the price of Christ's victory, but rather in the thought that the moral balance was thereby rectified, and that Christ was discharging our debt to the law which makes death the wages of sin. Thus the older conception of a ransom from Satan is on the point of being transformed into the thought of a sacrifice to God, in the sense of a payment to God of the debt due on account of sin.

In fact, Augustine himself, without retracting what he already taught, occasionally adopts a third interpretation of Christ's death, in which it is viewed in direct relation to God. "Christ expiated sin by dying, not for sins of His own, but for our sin."[2] "Since men were lying under the wrath of God by reason of their original sin, and since their original sin was aggravated by the number and magnitude of the actual sins added to it, there was need of a Mediator, a Reconciler, who by the offering of one sacrifice, of which all the sacrifices in the law and the prophets were types, should take away this wrath."[3] Yet Augustine never enlarges on this point of view, nor

[1] Book XIII, 13–16.
[2] *City of God*, x. 24.
[3] *Enchiridion*, ch. xxxiii.; cf. *Trinity*, XIII, ch. xvi.

does he lay much emphasis on it. He is not yet legalist enough to think of a law of retribution to which God Himself is bound; nor is he at all satisfied with the thought that God's wrath needs to be appeased. For he proceeds to qualify his own doctrine by laying new emphasis on the eternal love of God to His elect people. We are God's enemies only in the sense that we are the enemies of righteousness; for God loved us even when we were enemies. "Was it indeed true that God the Father was wroth with us, and then, seeing the death of His Son for us, was appeased towards us? Was then the Son already so far appeased towards us that He even deigned to die for us, while the Father was still so far wroth that, except His Son died for us, He would not be appeased? . . . I ask, unless the Father had been already appeased, would He have delivered up His own Son, not sparing Him for us? Does not this opinion seem to be contrary to that? In the one case the Son dies for us, and the Father is reconciled by His death; in the other, the Father Himself, as first loving us, does not spare the Son on our account, but Himself delivers Him up to death. Now I perceive that the Father loved us even from the beginning, not only before the Son died for us, but before the creation of the world."[1]

It is obvious, then, that Augustine hesitates between the old standpoint of demonic mythology and the more simple view that it was a ransom paid to God to satisfy His law or remove His wrath. The Eastern view is just beginning to make way for the Western; and Augustine, while accepting both views, does so with considerable qualifications. Indeed, it may be fairly held that his view of God's predestinating grace as embodied finally in the Church and its sacraments was hardly compatible with any legalist conception of the cross, and rendered less necessary any definite theory as to the means of realizing the eternal redemptive purpose. It was only a question of God's employing the fittest means for leading the elect back from sin to righteousness and from death to life. Accordingly we find Augustine gathering together

[1] *Trinity*, XIII, xi. and xvi.

the various aspects of Christ's redemptive work in a way that suggests to the reader that no special view of Christ's death was essential. "When sin had placed a wide gulf between God and the human race, it was expedient that a Mediator, who alone was without sin, should reconcile us to God and procure even for our bodies a resurrection to eternal life; that the pride of man might be exposed and cured by the humility of God: that man might be shown how far he had wandered from God, seeing that God became incarnate to restore him: that an example might be set to disobedient men in the life of obedience of the God-Man: that the fountain of grace might be opened by the Only-begotten taking upon Himself the form of a servant, hitherto devoid of merit: that an earnest of that resurrection of the body which is promised to the redeemed might be given in the resurrection of the Redeemer: that the devil might be subdued through the same nature which it was his boast to have deceived, and yet man not glorified, lest pride should spring up again; and in short, with a view to all the advantages which the thoughtful mind can perceive and describe—or perceive without being able to describe—as flowing from the transcendent mystery of the person of the Mediator."[1]

[1] *Enchiridion*, cviii.

CHAPTER VII

ANSELM'S THEORY OF REDEMPTION

It is a long step from Augustine to Anselm, from the Roman Empire in its death-throes to the reorganized world of the Middle Ages. Yet we pass over these intervening centuries as containing little for our purpose. Anselm of Canterbury found the problem of redemption pretty much where Augustine left it, except that the conception of the Greek-Christian theology—still retained by Augustine—had fallen more into the background. The ideas of satisfaction, guilt, merit, the infinite worth of Christ's death as a sacrifice, were long familiar to Western theology when Anselm undertook to give a rational explanation of the work of redemption in his *Cur Deus Homo*.

Anselm first sets aside the ancient view of the Greek Church, which still prevailed in the West, that Christ gave His life as a ransom to Satan for the souls he held under his power. The main error here lies in the idea that the devil had acquired some right over the human race. It is true that men were deservedly given over to be tormented by the devil for their sins; but this does not warrant the supposition that the devil had any claim of right upon them. "Although man might be justly tormented by the devil, it was nevertheless unjust for the devil to torment him. For man had deserved to be punished, nor could he be punished more suitably than by him with whom he had consented to sin. Yet the devil had gained no right to punish him. Indeed it was all the more unjust in him to do this, because he was not led to this by any love of justice, but was impelled merely

by the instinct of malice."[1] Having thus proved the illegitimacy of a theory of redemption which rests on any supposed right or quasi-right of Satan, Anselm passes entirely away from the Greek conceptions, and proceeds to work out a theory on the new lines, suggested by previous Western thought, of a ransom paid to God.

According to Anselm, sin is the failure on man's part to render God His due of honour and obedience; it has robbed God of His lawful right. And for this failure man must make reparation or be punished. To repair the wrong done, he must not only repay to God what he has stolen, but must restore more than he took away from God. It would not be sufficient to return to obedience; he must pay to God a full satisfaction for his former disobedience, and that with interest to make up for the dishonour done. It would be altogether unfitting if the debt were not paid in some way; for it would be unbecoming to God and inconsistent with His dignity if He placed righteous and sinful men on the same footing. Having robbed God of His honour, man must either pay, or be eternally punished. Either a spontaneous satisfaction must be given for the wrong done, or else punishment must be exacted of him who refuses of his own accord to pay satisfaction. God must either receive from man what will redound as much to His honour as the sin brought Him dishonour; or else God must take from man, by force and in punishment, the good he was destined for; thus compelling him through suffering to confess what he refused to confess of his own free will. In brief, the order of things demands either satisfaction or punishment (*satisfactio aut poena*).

But it is clear that man himself cannot give the needed satisfaction; for whatever he does to God's honour is already owed to God, and consequently it cannot be used as compensation for past violations of His honour. Even if he paid to the full his present debt, he could not make compensation for his past debts. Nay, even granting that his present obedience were not already due, it would still be true that any obedience he could offer would be

[1] *Cur Deus Homo*, i. 7.

insufficient as satisfaction for the past. For the very slightest sin is an infinite dishonour to God, being a sin against infinitude; and how could man by any finite obedience pay an infinite debt? It might be asked: Why then should not God remit a debt which in the very nature of the case man is unable to pay? The answer is, that this inability to pay is man's fault, and God would be inconsistent with Himself if He showed a mercy that was opposed to justice. Nay, even were God to remit the payment, yet the sinner would never be blessed, for he would still carry the weight of his guilt on his conscience.

Since, then, man ought to pay satisfaction but cannot pay it, we seem to be shut up to the other alternative. But this second alternative—eternal punishment—must be set aside as being inconsistent with the Divine ends. For if the punishment were carried out and man were lost, then God would have made him in vain and so have failed in His purpose concerning him; and that would not be seemly, or like God, or worthy of His unchanging goodness. God must work out man's salvation somehow; for His immutable honour is concerned in the carrying out of His creative purpose.

We must return to the first alternative, that of satisfaction; and some solution must be sought for what appears at first to be insoluble. On the one hand, man is helpless and cannot give the infinite satisfaction required: only an infinite being, a God could make such an infinite payment. On the other hand, seeing that man is the debtor, it is man who ought to pay the debt. Man ought to make the satisfaction: God, alone can make it; what other solution is possible but the work of the God-Man?

But how can Christ, the God-Man, give to God a satisfaction for human sin? For is not His whole life of obedience owed to God? Anselm answers that so far as His righteous life is concerned there can be no overflow of merit; for the life-obedience is what Christ as a man is under obligation to render to God. But His death stands on a different footing; the sinless Christ is under no obligation to submit to it. That He voluntarily

yielded Himself to death constitutes an act of overflowing merit, which may be applied to man's salvation.[1]

The satisfaction to God being thus proved possible, it only remains to inquire whether the death of Christ forms a suitable satisfaction, and also whether it is sufficient to outweigh the gravity of sin. Anselm maintains that it was a satisfaction most suitable in itself, because it simply reversed the evils committed by sinful man. "If man sinned by self-indulgence, was it not suitable that he should make satisfaction by severe endurance? And if man was so easily overcome by the devil, that by sinning he dishonoured God in the easiest way possible, was it not just that in making satisfaction to God for his sin, he should for the honour of God overcome the devil with the greatest possible difficulty? Or is it not fitting that he, who in sinning stole himself away from God as completely as possible, should, in making satisfaction, surrender himself to God in the completest possible way?"[2] And the satisfaction rendered was also suitable for man's sake. "How wisely was it ordered that He who was to redeem men, and to lead them back by His teaching from the way of death and destruction into the path of eternal life and blessedness, should spend His life among men, and that by His very course of life, while teaching them by word how they ought to live, should Himself give them an example? But how could He give Himself as an example to weak and mortal men and inspire them not to draw back from righteousness on account of injuries or insults or pains or death itself, unless they recognized that He Himself had experience of these things?"[3]

But, again, is this satisfaction, reasonable and fitting as it appears to be, also sufficient to balance and com-

[1] Anselm's friend, Boso, who conducts the dialogue with him, comes back later to this point; asking whether, if Christ pleased God by His death and set men an example of endurance, it was not in that way part of the perfect obedience He owed to God. Anselm replies by adducing the analogies of marriage and celibacy. Celibacy is more pleasing to God, yet we are not under obligation to take the vow. It is therefore an extra-service to God, a special act of obedience deserving a special reward. In other words, Christ's death is conceived as a work of supererogation, carrying with it a superabundant merit.

[2] II. 11.

[3] II. 11.

pensate for human sin? Sin is an infinite dishonour, since it were better that the universe should perish than that one sin should be committed. The only thing that can outweigh it, therefore, is some gift of infinite value, some service which will give God more satisfaction than the sin gave Him dissatisfaction. Christ's death is precisely such a service. The giving of Himself by accepting death is a greater service to God's honour than all the sins of the world were a detraction from it; it is an incomparable offering, richly sufficient to compensate for all human sin.

Having now offered to God this deed of satisfaction by submitting to a death He was under no obligation to pay, Christ is deserving of a recompense. God owed Him a reward for His infinitely meritorious deed. Yet He could not pay it to Christ Himself; for all things belonging to the Father were already His. But Christ died as man for man's sake, to satisfy God's offended honour on his behalf; and so He passes over the reward to those for whom He died. His deed is reckoned as man's satisfaction to God. The gift of the Cross has cancelled man's debt; and, now that God's honour is re-established, the way of salvation is secured. All who come to God in Christ's name, and live as the sacred Scriptures teach them, will undoubtedly be saved.

In this theory of satisfaction, the older Greek conception of redemption as a victory achieved over sin and death is set aside, and replaced by the view which characterizes Western theology generally, that Christ's death was a sacrifice or satisfaction rendered to God for the cancelling of human guilt. Anselm's work has at least the merit of being the first earnest attempt to work out a simple compact theory on definite premises. It has also the merit of setting the problem within the personal and moral sphere, and of frankly employing the common analogies of human experience. The defect of the earlier thought of the Greek-Christian Church lay in abstractness of form; it viewed redemption either as a victory over Satan, or else as a mystical and—to the

ordinary mind—semi-magical renovation of our human nature. On the surface, therefore, Anselm's doctrine has the advantage; it presents the atonement as a moral transaction in which God deals as a moral Governor with human persons.

In some respects there are breaks in the logic of the argument. Thus Anselm seems at first to maintain that God's honour will be equally safeguarded either by satisfaction or by punishment. Yet it appears later, that God's honour is involved in the attainment of the end designed for humanity, so that the honour of God is shut up to the one method, viz., a deed of satisfaction. After all, then, it seems that God's honour is not safeguarded by punishment; for the punishment of mankind would involve the failure of God's purpose for the world. This apparent inconsistency arises from the fact that Anselm advances, from the merely juristic conception of God as an injured private person whose rights have been invaded, to the higher Christian thought of God as one who has created man for blessedness and insists on realizing His purpose of good through all the deviations of human failure and sin. Thus the first thought of what God's honour demands is transcended by the worthier conception of the honour of God's creative goodness as requiring the realization of the Divine ends. Anselm, in his deeper thoughts, is well aware that God's real honour is satisfied only when the gracious purpose of His will is realized. Had he only adhered to this conception, and carried it out further, he would scarcely have been content to view Christ's satisfaction as a compensation to offended personal honour, but would have conceived it more simply as a means of turning man from sin to God and so enabling him to realize the Divine purpose of his creation.[1]

It may be noticed, in the same connection, that Anselm gives two reasons to explain why God could not forgive men without compensation—the one derived from his

[1] It may be also observed that, even if the lower conception of God's honour be maintained, Anselm's alternatives of direct punishment and (vicarious) satisfaction do not exhaust the possibilities of the case. Anselm simply ignores the possibility of a vicarious punishment.

prevailing view of God's honour, the other from a much higher conception. The one is drawn from his own premise as to God's offended dignity; it is that the free remission of sins would be derogatory to God's honour and justice, and so create a discord in God between His mercy and His justice. But he also develops another reason, namely, that the free forgiveness of sins, for which no atonement had been made, would not be good for man's own sake; because the debt would always remain, leaving man in a state of injustice (consciously guilty, as we should say), so that even in Paradise he would not be really blessed. Anselm thus rightly rejects a bare remission of sin which is tantamount to the ignoring of it. Yet the two reasons given—that God's injured honour must be satisfied, and again, that man's good demands more than a bare remission—do not hang well together; the one is based on the thought that God's honour demands a personal satisfaction, the other on the higher thought that God's honour demands that His purpose of good for man be realized. For Anselm these two conceptions lie apart; it never occurs to him that God's personal honour is only satisfied when the good of man is secured. He generally adheres to his original thought of what God's honour demands; only occasionally—as here—does he look beyond the limits of his own theory.

As one surveys the development of the theory on these lines, inadequacies are revealed at almost every point. How, indeed, can we expect to understand the meaning of any historical fact, when we lift it entirely out of its context of circumstance, and surround it with categories which are taken at random from tradition and the less ideal customs of society? Thus sin is defined in the most baldly abstract way as the failure to pay God His due, an insult to His honour which must be compensated—like the invaded rights of a private person—by reparation or punishment. The evil of sin in its concrete reality is thus forgotten, and our redemption from it is consequently reduced to a similar abstraction. The significance of Christ's death is found mainly in the satisfaction it gives to God's offended honour; although

—and this only by the way—its value is also found in the great example it sets before man of self-surrender and endurance for righteousness' sake. The possibility of a vicarious satisfaction, further, rests on the supposition —totally unwarranted by the Scriptures to which Anselm appeals—that the service rendered to God on the cross was more than the obedience which Christ owed to God. If we remove this conception of an overplus of service, or work of supererogation, the whole structure collapses. And another vital point of Anselm's thought is the assertion that, since Christ's life is of great value in the sight of God, the surrender of that life on the cross must be an infinite satisfaction. But how, apart from some further meaning, could the death of Christ be a satisfaction to God at all? In itself, and apart from some further end to be achieved by it, Christ's death would undoubtedly give to God the very opposite of satisfaction! The more precious Christ's life was, the greater evil would His death be in God's sight; and it is this very fact that first made the death of Christ a problem for Christian faith.

Finally, the work of Christ, as presented by Anselm, hangs but loosely with the positive redemption of man, which all Christians recognize as Christ's purpose and aim; indeed it is difficult, if not impossible, to apply it to the concrete facts of experience. By His death, it is said, Christ gave an infinite satisfaction to God for all the sins of the world, thereby gaining an infinite merit which He transfers to sinful men, so that they have no longer to fear God's offended honour. This is surely a very abstract and meagre picture of the value of the cross in human life. But it is also inapplicable; for, when we ask what the cross has accomplished, we appear to be left with two alternatives, neither of which fits the facts of experience. If redemption is the remission of sins achieved by Christ's satisfaction, then all men stand redeemed; for the sins of the whole world have been squared by the satisfaction rendered to God's injured honour. But if redemption is conceived as the bringing of men into right relations to God, as the reconciliation

of the human will with the Divine, then on Anselm's scheme nothing further is achieved than the barest possibility of redemption. Whether men are actually redeemed or not depends, as Anselm asserts at the close of his work, on a condition to which the death of Christ has no direct relation—whether, namely, they do, or do not, follow the example of Christ, and give obedience to His commands. What is achieved by the cross is not redemption or any potentiality of redemption; it is only the removal of an initial impossibility on God's part. It is not any actual forgiveness of sins; for that depends just as before on the fulfilling of the commandments of God. On the one hand, then, we have the offended honour of God satisfied, so that he has no right to be further offended even if we continue in sin; on the other hand, we are driven to conclude that the honour of God is quick and sensitive as ever, and that man's salvation depends on his own righteousness. In short, this theory, like many others that follow it on different lines, first sets up a fictitious barrier in God and finds the whole significance of Christ's death in its removal. Of the true barrier to salvation, which lies not in God but in man, Anselm has little or nothing to say.

CHAPTER VIII

REDEMPTION IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

IN spite of its acuteness and apparent logical simplicity, the theory of Anselm was never accepted as sufficient even by those who adopted the categories of satisfaction, merit and supererogatory work. Indeed, one might say that it was not quite satisfactory to Anselm himself, for in his more devotional writings he dwells, not so much on God's honour and the satisfaction rendered to it on the cross, as on the love of God, and the saving impression made on the heart by Christ's humility and condescension in taking our flesh and bearing our sins.

In his younger contemporary, ABELARD, we find these deeper ethical categories brought into the foreground. Instead of starting from formal conceptions, such as God's honour, and sin as an insult against it, Abelard dwells prevailingly on the facts of moral experience. It is true that while commenting on passages of Scripture he frequently accepts the conventional interpretations. Thus he interprets the saying that we were "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter i. 19) as meaning that we were bought back from Satan to whom we were enslaved. Or, again, commenting on Romans iv. 25 ("Who was delivered for our offences"), and on Romans viii. 3 ("condemned sin in the flesh"), he accepts the thought that Christ bore our sins in His flesh by paying the penalty of them (peccatum commisimus cujus ille poenam sustinuit).[1] Yet he does not enlarge upon the

[1] R. C. Moberly considers that in such expressions Abelard "seems to be doing homage to conventional modes of expression." *Atonement and Personality*, p. 381.

thought of Christ's sufferings as the punishment of sin; and later he retracts his view as to a ransom paid to Satan, and rejects it as decisively as Anselm. His prevailing doctrine lies in quite another direction. God's holiness and love are eternal principles of His action, and the cross is above all else the manifestation of the love of God, which hates sin only because it is love. Christ died on the cross in order by the exhibition of so great grace to draw away our souls from the desire of sinning. The constantly recurring thought is that Christ brings us salvation and reconciliation to God by kindling our cold hearts to responsive love. "It is in this way that we are justified by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God, that by the unique grace manifested to us, in that His Son took our nature, and persisted even to death in instructing us by word and example, He has drawn us the more closely to Himself in love; so that we are fired by so great a gift of Divine grace, and genuine love no longer recoils before any endurance for His sake. . . . Our redemption, therefore, is found in that highest love inspired in us by Christ's passion, which not only frees us from the slavery of sin, but gains for us the true liberty of the children of God; so that we accomplish all things by love rather than by fear of Him who has shown us so great grace; than which, as He Himself attests, a greater cannot be found. 'Greater love,' He says, 'hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'"[1] Again, comparing the death of Christ with that of the martyrs of the faith, he says: "In the light of Christ's death, all the torments of the martyrs are as nothing, and none can compare with Him in suffering. It is evident that all this was done in order that He might show how great love He had to men, and so enflame them to greater love in return."[2]

While this is the central and ever-recurring thought of Abelard, he also brings in the supplementary thought that Christ represents us before God by His intercession for us, and by sustaining our deficient righteousness with

[1] *Commentary on Romans*, iii. 26.

[2] *Epitome of Christian Theology*, ch. xxv.

His own. Our responsive love is at best imperfect, and so we must trust to the merit of Christ's perfect love and righteousness. This "merit" of Christ which He shares with His followers is not associated with the cross alone; it is based on the love and obedience shown in all His earthly ministry.

When we compare these conceptions of Abelard with the views of Anselm, we must not exaggerate the contrast for the sake of a more vivid presentation. They belonged to the same age, and have much in common. Both set aside the theory of a just claim of Satan. Both recognize that Christ's death may be viewed in its Godward, as well as in its manward, aspect; and both recognize that man is helpless of himself, and even that the forgiveness of sins rests on vicarious merit. The difference lies in this, that Anselm regards the work of Christ mainly in its Godward aspect, while Abelard has chiefly the manward effect in view. To Anselm the central value of the cross lies in its being a deed of satisfaction to the Divine honour; and in carrying out this principle he isolates the death of Christ from His life of obedience. For Abelard every consideration is subordinate to the manward value of Christ's reconciling work. Christ bears man's sin, and death as its penalty, not to satisfy God's honour or justice, but in order to bring home to us the love of God, and so to transform our lives into His image. He sees in the cross, and indeed in the whole life of Christ, the love of God going forth to seek and recover the lost; and if he speaks of Christ's merit as supplementing our human frailty, the merit is ethically conceived as the perfect love and obedience which accompany and stimulate the believer's love and obedience. Thus, in Anselm's scheme, the atonement leaves the reconciliation of man to God still unattained; man must still work out his salvation by following Christ's example, and his assurance of forgiveness rests, after all, on his own achievement of goodness. On Abelard's theory, the work of Christ is viewed as a real reconciliation, drawing men within the sphere of the Divine love, and making forgiveness a direct and immediate experience.

It is sometimes held that Anselm's doctrine has this advantage over Abelard's, that it sets forth the fact of an "objective" atonement, Abelard's being a merely "subjective" theory. Such words are of little value, whether in philosophy or in theology. Here we take them to indicate that Anselm's theory depicts the essential work of Christ as something achieved outside the sphere of human experience, whereas with Abelard there is a radical connection between Christ's work and man's sin and weakness. In that case it is not at all clear that an objective theory is preferable to a subjective one. But under cover of these words another thought is frequently insinuated: namely, that Anselm's theory presents Christ's work as having a definite and positive religious value, whereas Abelard's theory reduces it to a mere display of virtue, without redemptive significance.[1] The very contrary might be fairly maintained. The theory of Anselm only assures men of a possibility of salvation, and rests man's redemption finally on the loyalty and obedience of the believer; whereas Abelard exhibits the death of Christ as a genuine power of God unto salvation, and as itself bringing about the needed reconciliation.

The later theology of the Middle Ages added little that was positively new to the doctrine; but it laid increasing emphasis on the merit of Christ, and on the satisfaction made by Christ's death as the main source of that merit. It never quite returned to the definite theory of Anselm, while that of Abelard was too well in accord with the devout experience of the believer to be ignored. St. Bernard made himself the defender of orthodoxy, and attacked Abelard, not on his main position, but because he had abandoned the idea of a transaction with Satan, which he regarded as an essential factor in any true view of redemption. Later theologians, however, set this Satanic theory aside, or interpreted it in such a way that it could easily be translated into ethical terms. We may

[1] Compare Bernard's scoffing remark in a letter to Pope Innocent II, "What does it matter that Christ instructed us, if He did not redeem us? (quid prodest quod nos instituit si non restituit?)"

take as chief representatives of the time Peter of Lombardy, the master of sentences, whose work *Sententiarum Libri Quatuor* was widely used as a theological text book; Thomas Aquinas, whose *Summa Theologica* has continued to be the main source and standard of Roman Catholic orthodoxy; and finally Duns Scotus, who represents the later decline of theological thought.

Peter of Lombardy seeks to gather up in a comprehensive way the various aspects of the Atonement as presented by the ancient fathers of the Church, both of the East and of the West. He starts from the conception of the unique merit secured for man by the Cross of Christ. Christ, by becoming man and by manifesting the virtues of humility and perfect obedience, merited for Himself the exaltation to the right hand of the Father and the name that is above every name. But by His death He has gained in addition a merit that is available for others, to secure their deliverance from sin, punishment and Satan.

When we ask how Christ has secured this gain for us, his main answer is that Christ by His perfect and matchless humility has regained for man the position which in Adam he had lost through pride. By the self-humiliation of the Cross the Saviour has out-weighed and cancelled the sin of pride, which led to man's ruin. This cancellation of sin is not, however, conceived in a merely external and juristic sense; it comprehends the actual renewal of life in the believer, and the work of Christ includes His saving power in the believer's heart. "We are delivered from the devil and from sin through Christ's death, because, as the Apostle says, 'We are justified in His blood,' and so being justified, that is, released from sin, we are delivered from the devil, who holds us by the chains of our sins. But how are we released from sin by His death? Because by His death, as the Apostle says, 'the love of God is commended to us,' that is, the commendable and matchless love of God towards us appears in that He gave up His Son to death for us sinners. And the pledge of so great love being thus

manifested, we are both moved and fired to love God who did so great things for us ; and by this we are justified, that is, made just, being delivered from our sins. Hence the death of Christ justifies us, when, through it, love is kindled in our hearts." Here the merit of Christ's work is viewed in conjunction with its gracious transforming power in human hearts.

Though Peter reiterates that the chains of Satan are simply our sins, and that deliverance from sin is deliverance from his power, he is not content to let the older doctrine pass on these terms. He returns again to the more realistic view that the devil who deceived man at the beginning was conquered by Christ's death. He even falls into the old thought of a pious fraud practised on the evil one, as when he says that Christ "held out His cross to him like a trap, and placed His blood before him as a bait." Yet he does not mean that Christ treated Satan unjustly. He returns rather to Augustine's view. Satan, though he found in Christ nothing worthy of death, slew Him ; and so, "it was just that those whom he held as debtors should be set free, those, namely, who believe in Him who was unjustly slain." Side by side, however, with this realistic view, runs a deeper ethical conception ; namely, that the devil is merely God's instrument of judgment, and that Christ by His death paid the debt which we owed to God. For Peter proceeds to explain that Christ not only deleted or cancelled our sins on the cross, but also extinguished our guilt and redeemed us from punishment ; bearing our sins, that is the penalty of our sins, in His body on the tree. He does not enlarge further on this, however, except to point out that, while the penalty of everlasting death is set aside for us by the cross, the penalties of this life remain ; though even here the penalty paid by Christ co-operates with the penalties prescribed by the Church to extinguish the debt. These qualifications indicate, not merely that the Schoolman was conforming his views to the ideas underlying the penance-system of the Church, but that in his view the satisfaction rendered by Christ includes the satisfactions of the penitent,

and at the same time supplements their imperfection in God's sight.

The reason why Peter of Lombardy refrains from dwelling on the penal aspect of Christ's death is the same as we found in the case of Augustine; namely, the difficulty of conceiving how suffering, as such, could be a satisfaction to God. For Peter goes on to emphasize that it was not God who needed to be reconciled, but rather we who needed to be turned from our enmity and reconciled to God. Following the spirit, and almost the language, of Augustine, he says: "We are reconciled to God, according to the apostle, by the death of Christ. This is not to be understood as though Christ so reconciled us that God began to love those whom He had hated, as when an enemy is reconciled to an enemy . . . for it was not because we were reconciled to Him by Christ's death that He began to love us, for He loved us before the world was made and before we had any being. How then have we been reconciled to the God who loved us? Because of our sins we had enmity with Him who had love towards us, and that even when by doing iniquity we exercised our enmity against Him. We were enemies to God in the same way as our sins are the enemies of righteousness; and so when our sins are removed such enmities are ended." [1]

In view of this ethical interpretation we do not wonder that Peter of Lombardy was accused of Abelardian sympathies. If he goes beyond Abelard in adhering to the conception of a transaction with Satan, it is only in the modified form in which Augustine held it, and the ethical conception so pervades it that as a distinct theory it becomes almost superfluous. For the rest, the emphasis is distinctly laid on the love of God as kindling a responsive love in us and so freeing us from the bondage of our sins. The more juristic element only appears in the thought that Christ's humility, submitting even to the cross, counterbalances and cancels man's radical sin of pride, or that the merit of Christ's death co-operates with our

[1] Book III, Dist. 18, 19, 20.

righteousness, and with the penances imposed by the Church, to absolve us from our guilt.

Perhaps the least satisfactory conception in this scheme of thought is that of justification as the infused grace by which the sinner is actually made righteous, and so brought into a fit condition to receive the forgiveness of sins. While it is recognized that all human merit is due to God's prevenient or His co-operating grace, it is also assumed that forgiveness can only follow upon the renewal of life. The assurance of forgiveness (identified unfortunately with *remissio poenae*, the freedom from penalty) is thus made to rest in part on the believer's renewal in righteousness. It is only indirectly related to the death of Christ; in so far, namely, as that death works to the renewal of our sinful lives; or again, in so far as the merit of Christ is supposed to supplement the deficiency of the believer's righteousness and his observance of the penances imposed by the Church. The lack of an adequate conception of forgiveness, as gifted and sealed to man on the cross, is a noteworthy fact in the history of the thought of the Middle Ages.

THOMAS AQUINAS, the greatest representative of this period, treats of the suffering and death of Christ in the third part of his *Sum of Theology*. While admitting that the death of Christ was not absolutely necessary, he holds that it was the most suitable way in which man's salvation could be accomplished. In showing this, he attempts to do justice to all aspects of Christ's work; but he fails to unite them in a single point of view. He deals with the question in his usual scholastic fashion, treating first of the modes of Christ's atoning work and then of its effects.

Under the first head he views Christ's work in its aspects of merit, of satisfaction, of sacrifice and of redemption. It was a work of merit. As head of the Church, Christ has merited salvation for us by His entire life of humility and obedience, but especially by His suffering and death, which removed the obstacles to our salvation. Christ's passion was also a satisfaction to God. For by His love and obedience in suffering he exhibited to God what

pleased Him much more than the sin of man had displeased Him. The value of Christ's suffering as a satisfaction is to be measured by the greatness of the love revealed, the dignity of the life surrendered, and also the depth and magnitude of His physical and mental torment. Such a satisfaction is not only sufficient to counterbalance the sin of His murderers, but a superabundant satisfaction for the sins of the entire human race. Further, Christ's death was a sacrifice. For a sacrifice is something done which gives God the honour due to Him in order to appease Him; such an offering was made by Christ in yielding to death voluntarily and from the highest motive of love. Finally, His work is one of Redemption. For it releases men from a two-fold obligation: from the slavery of sin which makes us slaves of Satan, and from the liability to punishment, of which Satan is God's minister and agent. "Since the suffering of Christ was a sufficient and superabundant satisfaction for the sin, and also the liability to punishment, of the human race, it was the price, so to speak, of our liberation from the double obligation." He adds, however, that the price was paid to God, not to Satan. For God was the judge of man, Satan was only the executioner.

Following these various points of view, he proceeds to sum up the actual effects of Christ's death. (1) We are released from our sins, and this in a threefold way. In the first place, the cross calls forth our love, and through love we gain the pardon of our sins. Secondly, it redeems us from sin, by meeting our obligations. Christ died as head of His Church, and thus we have paid our obligations in Him. "It is just as if a man, by some meritorious work which he did by his hand, were to redeem himself from the sin his foot had committed. For as the natural body consists of a diversity of members, so the whole Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, is regarded as one person with its Head." And thirdly, it redeems us from sin in a directly efficacious way, operating on us with a Divine power for the expulsion of our sin. (2) We are released from the power of the devil (here he

quotes Augustine approvingly). (3) We are absolved from the penalty of sin; for the death of Christ is both a superabundant satisfaction which cancels our guilt, and is also a power to release us from the sin on which our guilt depends. (4) We are reconciled to God; for Christ's death removes the sin which made us enemies of God (who loved us "quantum ad naturam," but hated us "quantum ad culpam"), and is also a most acceptable sacrifice, appeasing God for every offence of the human race. (5) He has by His death opened to us the gates of heaven, removing the obstacles of sin and guilt for all who share in His passion by faith and love and the use of the sacraments. And finally (6) He has merited His own exaltation to God's right hand by submitting to the death of the cross.[1]

The main idea here is that of satisfaction conjoined with merit, but the Abelardian point of view is also recognized. In fact, Aquinas has done his best to embody all points of view; but he has only succeeded in piecing them together in a mechanical way without welding them into a harmonious whole; and his orderly marshalling of the various items can scarcely hide from us the intrinsic disorder of his thought. Two distinct theories are here in conflict—the juristic theory of meritorious satisfaction, according to which Christ's work of obedience and suffering counterbalances in God's sight our disobedience, and meets our liability to punishment by paying the price of our release from it; and the moral theory, which rests on the idea of individual righteousness and merit as necessary to salvation, and looks on the cross as a power to awaken love and new obedience. Although Aquinas attempts to give these views a parallel place in his exposition, he has not succeeded in harmonizing them. In the first line of thought, where he blends the idea of a meritorious obedience with that of a penal satisfaction, he speaks as though forgiveness, that is, the removal of guilt and liability to punishment, were immediately and directly secured by the cross. In the second, where the cross is viewed as the Divine power which calls forth

[1] *Summa Theologica*, III, Questions 48 and 49.

responsive love, and thus acts as a principle within us for the removal of sin, he speaks as if the forgiveness of sin, with removal of its penalty, were the result of our own righteousness, and thus only indirectly the effect of the work of Christ. On the one view forgiveness is won for us on the cross; on the other, it still waits upon the actual purging away of the sin on which guilt and the liability to punishment depend. Even when Aquinas is dealing more carefully with the question of the removal of guilt (*remissio culpae*) in an earlier chapter on Justification, he falls into the same inevitable ambiguity. Justification, he teaches, involves the remission of guilt, but it implies three things which naturally precede, namely, the infusion of grace, a movement of the free will towards God by faith, and a movement of free will against sin. Though he admits that these things do not follow one another in turn, seeing that they belong to the one Divine justifying act, "yet in the order of nature one of these things is prior to the other; and among them by natural order the first is the infusion of grace, the second the movement of the free will toward God, the third the movement of free will against sin, and the fourth is the remission of guilt."[1] Here, again, the immediate grace of forgiveness, as sealed on the cross, fades into a remission of guilt which comes at the end of the justifying process, and is dependent on our free return from sin to God. And finally, when one reads what Aquinas says of the sacrament of penance with its human satisfactions to God and the Church, one realizes that the death of Christ is really conceived as a mere supplement to human merit and righteousness.

The dissolution of this doctrine of the Middle Ages is seen in the teaching of DUNS SCOTUS, who tears down one by one the pillars of the entire structure of thought. He starts from the conception of God as absolute sovereign Will, and from that standpoint freely criticizes all satisfaction theories. If God is transcendent Will, how can we by any abstract reasoning pronounce what will be a sufficient satisfaction to Him? If God accept what we

[1] Cf. Part II, I Qu. 113, Art. 6 and 8.

call an imperfect satisfaction, or even if He remit sin without any satisfaction at all, who can object? In any case, we cannot measure the exact magnitude of man's sin, and so we cannot reason upon the equivalence between the sin committed and the satisfaction rendered by Christ. All we know is that man's sin is in itself finite. Only in a superficial way can we speak of it as infinite, in the sense of its being an offence against an Infinite Being; for since actual sins are always committed against finite beings, they are clearly finite in their own nature. There is no absolute or infinite evil in human life. Similarly, the satisfaction of Christ was finite; for it was as man, not as God, that He laboured, suffered and died. All definite comparison, therefore, between the merit of Christ and the demerit of man is impossible, and we must be content to suppose that Christ's satisfaction was sufficient, because God accepted it as such, and that He accepted it because He willed so to do. He might have devised any other mode of redemption. We must simply refer the matter to His sovereign will, and conclude that the rationale of redemption is beyond our comprehension.

The two chief defects of the doctrine of the Middle Ages lay, on the one hand, in the uncritical acceptance of inferior juristic categories, as seen in their satisfaction-theories; and, on the other hand, in the nomistic construction of the more ethical Abelardian ideas. In the main, God was conceived as a private individual whose rights had been invaded by sin, and who therefore required either the punishment of the offenders, or satisfaction of some sort. When the more spiritual and ethical principle of Abelard was recognized, it was construed, in nomistic fashion, as implying that the forgiveness of sins required as its condition the believer's renewal in love and obedience. The failure on both of these counts may fairly be referred to the same radical error of conceiving God's relation to man in terms of law and private right, instead of the highest ethical standard. When we look at the cross of Christ in its veritable context, and in the light of the ethical ideals which Christ's Gospel has made

possible to us, the inferiority of the scholastic categories of thought becomes all too apparent. As Ritschl remarks,[1] "if it is the task of theology to comprehend the relation of God and man in the highest terms known to us, and if the atoning work of Christ must be interpreted accordingly, it cannot be said that the system of the Middle Ages has finally solved the problem of Christ's atonement."

[1] Cf. *Rechtfertigung u. Versöhnung*, I, ch. ii, 13.

CHAPTER IX

THE REFORMATION DOCTRINE

The Reformation of the sixteenth century did not bring about any thorough revision of all the points of faith embodied in Church tradition. The Reformers were called by the practical needs of the time to challenge especially those elements of doctrine which seemed to them to contravene the Gospel of God's grace to sinners. Hence the centre of controversy lay, not in any specific doctrine of the work of Christ, but rather in those conceptions of human merit and righteousness which seemed to minimize the efficiency of that work for human salvation. In the Middle Ages the doctrine of Divine forgiveness referred that blessing more or less directly to the Atonement of Christ and the grace of God operating through it, but never in such a way as to exclude human merit. It was no doubt generally recognized that all human merits are God's gifts, due finally to His grace; yet they were none the less man's own meritorious work, though subordinate in value to the supremely meritorious work of Christ. The door was thus left open for that iniquitous sale of Church "pardons" which aroused the conscience of the Reformers, and led them to revise the doctrine of merit, and of the Church's power to bestow absolution, from which the abuse had emanated.

In opposing to the entire system of penances and human satisfactions the doctrine of justification (forgiveness) by faith alone, the Reformers meant above all else to emphasize the Divine free and undeserved grace. In their preaching of the Gospel, they conceived of God, not as a feudal or ecclesiastical lord who metes out blessing by any

measure of human deserving, but as the gracious, loving Father in Christ, who acts indeed in accordance with moral requirements, but who has revealed in Christ His Fatherly heart, and freely bestows on all who come to Him in faith the blessings of forgiveness, renewal in righteousness, and all good. In their very eagerness to maintain the doctrine of a wholly unmerited grace, they fell at times into the exaggeration of Augustine, and in order to "denude man of all virtue, that he might be clothed by God"[1] they denied that unregenerate man could desire or achieve anything that possessed worth in God's sight, much less co-operate with God or do anything towards his own salvation. This extreme position did not pass without some protest[2]; but it was carried by the voice of the Church because it enshrined the fundamental truth that man must look for the forgiveness of his sins and for final salvation to the free and unmerited grace of God.

This being their essential position, it is not surprising that the Reformers should find it difficult to give any place in their scheme of salvation to such conceptions of the Middle Ages as merit and satisfaction. For they begin by denying the validity of these conceptions in the ordinary relations of man to God.[3] They explicitly condemn the view on which the confessional system of the Church was built, namely, that man can achieve merit in God's sight—that he can do anything that gives him

[1] Cf. Calvin's Preface to the *Institutes*.

[2] Cf. Melanchthon and the Synergist controversy. The more moderate party, though no doubt guided by a right instinct, practically fell back into the Co-operation theory of the Middle Ages, which found room for human freedom only by limiting the Divine grace.

[3] Cf. Calvin: "Whoever he was who first applied the term *Merit* to human works, viewed in relation to God's judgment, showed little consideration for the purity of the faith. I do not care for disputes about words; but I could wish that Christian writers had been prudent enough not to think of using, needlessly, terms that were foreign to Scripture (extranea a Scripturis vocabula)—terms which might produce much stumbling, and very little advantage" (*Institutes*, Book III, ch. xv). For the other term, compare Luther's sharp words: "The term *Satisfaction* should be entirely abolished in our churches and theology: it should be handed back to the law-courts and schools of the jurists, to which it belongs, and from which the Papists derived it" (*Kirchenpostille*, I, 621).

a claim upon God or be anything more than an "unprofitable servant" even when he fulfils the Divine commandment. No man can do more than his duty, in fact every man fails of his duty; and no satisfaction for the sins that are past and no supererogatory works of merit are possible to him. The relation of God to those elected to life is one of sheer grace to the undeserving. Our sole hope lies in the mercy of God, which has in Christ condescended to meet our need, and to seal on the cross a forgiveness that is bestowed on faith alone.

But if the human analogies of merit and satisfaction are thus shown to be without foundation in our relation to God, logic would seem to require that they should be equally set aside in the interpretation of Christ's work. The Reformers, however, did not carry their criticism to a logical conclusion; at the most they made an effort, by somewhat modifying the conceptions implied in the terms, to render them less unsuitable when applied to the work of redemption. Calvin devotes a whole chapter of his *Institutes* to the term "merit" and its applicability to Christ's atonement.[1] There he considers the "subtle objection" that if salvation is of God's pure and undeserved grace, it cannot also be viewed as "merited" by Christ. Returning to the scholastic treatment of the merit of Christ, and the distinction usually made between what Christ merited for Himself and what He merited for others, he concedes willingly that the former of these conceptions may be ignored. The question whether Christ merited anything for Himself is due to a foolish curiosity. If answered at all, it must be in the negative; for by what merit could any man attain to the position of the world's Judge and ruler at God's right hand? and what need had Christ to acquire anything for Himself, since all that was God's was also His? But, in reference to the question of Christ's merit for others, he holds that since Christ made satisfaction for our sins, He must in some sense have "merited" our salvation. This does not mean, however, that Christ as a man gained any merit; for there is no worthiness in man

[1] Cf. *Institutes*, Book II, ch. xvii.

that can merit God's favour. What is meant is simply that the Son of God by paying our penalty, and appeasing God by His obedience, has by this righteousness gained salvation for us. Nor is salvation any the less a free gift that it has been purchased or merited in this sense. "When we treat of the merit of Christ, we do not place the beginning of it in Him, but we ascend to the ordinance of God which is the primary cause; because of His mere good pleasure He appointed a Mediator to purchase salvation for us. And thus it is a stupid error to oppose the merit of Christ to the mercy of God. For it is a well-known rule that subaltern terms do not disagree; and so it is quite consistent to say that the justification of man flows gratuitously from the mere mercy of God, and at the same time that Christ's merit intervenes in subordination to God's mercy. . . . In a word, since the merit of Christ depends entirely on God's grace (which provided this mode of salvation for us), the former is not less fitly opposed to all human righteousness than the latter."[1] In other words, Calvin admits that we are not to think of Christ's work on the analogy of a human work which has merited anything from God; for in Him as a man "there cannot be found a worth which could make God a debtor (Deum promereri)." Nor again does the word "merit" fitly characterize Christ's work in its relation to God; for the primary author of our salvation is God Himself, and Christ's work is only the subordinate cause of it, inasmuch as He achieves it in the fulfilment of God's ordination. All that is meant, then, when we speak of Christ's merit, is that, in accordance with the Divine grace, which ordained the redemption, Christ has carried out the Divine will, and actually achieved our redemption.

This elaborate defence of a term, of which Calvin obviously feels the unfitness, even in relation to the work of Christ, and which accordingly he explains almost to the point of emptying it of its original meaning, may well surprise us in one who expressly rejects all human merit or power to claim the Divine favour. One cannot but ask: Why did Calvin, who refused to apply the concep-

[1] Cf. *Institutes*, Bk. II, chap. xvii. sec. 1.

tion of merit to any human work whatsoever, and would not even allow it to be applied there in a subaltern or subordinate way, nevertheless cling to it in its application to the Divine work of Christ? The answer seems to be, not simply that the weight of past tradition was too strong for him, but that his view of the Atonement was not radically revised in accordance with his conception of the mercy of God as the supreme category. In fact, one must recognize that the doctrine of the Reformers was no new treatment of the question as a whole, but only a modification of the view of the Middle Ages. So long as their central doctrine remained intact, that the salvation of man is a matter of God's free grace in Christ and bestowed on faith without any deserving on our part, the Reformers were content to proceed along the lines already laid down by the Roman Catholic Church.

In one point, however, the Reformers approached the foundations of the question and challenged the view of the later Middle Ages which threatened to undermine faith in the value and necessity of atonement. In contrast with the Scotist conception of God as absolute and arbitrary Will, able to accept any atonement or even to dispense with atonement, the Reformers from the first placed a new emphasis on the righteous judgment of God as the principle on which the mediation of Christ must be interpreted. Thus the penal view of Christ's death came to occupy the foreground of thought. While the grace of God remained the root-motive of redemption, the means of reconciliation were viewed as meeting the indefeasible requirement of moral law, which cannot allow sin to go unpunished.

Luther himself was no systematic theologian, but he gave Protestant theology its impulse and direction. In his genial way he welcomes and uses any conception which gives expression to the grace of God in Christ, as bearing the weight of the world's sin, and leading men back to peace with God. While recognizing the atoning value of all Christ's labour and suffering obedience, he finds a definite work of salvation accomplished on the cross. In his varying interpretations he adopts at

least two distinct, and, as it might seem, inconsistent standpoints. On the one hand, following his favourite thought that God is truly revealed to us, not in the law, but in Christ, not as threatening Judge, but as pure goodness, compassion and grace, he treats the law as one of the powers hostile to God's grace, and accordingly speaks of Christ as rendering satisfaction for us in His death to all the powers of law, death, hell and devil, answering all the claims of the evil powers, repelling their taunts and releasing us from their dominion. But again, returning to the thought of God as moral Lawgiver and Judge as well as gracious Father and Saviour, he adopts and enlarges upon the view of vicarious punishment. He pictures Christ on the cross as taking man's place, enduring the punishment of man's sin even to the wrath and curse of God, and thus changing the angry Judge into a pitiful Father! In other words, Luther seems still to hesitate between the thought of a satisfaction paid to God, and that of a satisfaction to the claims of Satan and the opposing powers. Viewing God, now from the standpoint of the law as the Judge who must punish sin, and again from the standpoint of His revelation in Christ as a God of grace and all good, he treats the atonement from both view-points as being equally justified; and leaves it to the theologians, if they can, to harmonize them.

Calvin sets forth the Protestant doctrine in more thoughtful and measured terms, and endeavours in his theory of satisfaction to do justice to both sides of God's character. As we have seen, he found difficulty in reconciling the evangelical doctrine of pure grace with that of a merited salvation. In treating the work of Christ as a satisfaction to God, he finds a similar difficulty in reconciling the eternal love and grace of God to believers with the need of a satisfaction or expiation. He tries to reconcile them by supposing that in some ineffable way God loved us and was incensed against us at one and the same time. "After a marvellous Divine fashion God loved us even while He hated us." He hated us, namely, because of our corrupt nature and sinful life;

yet He found also something to love in us, because we were His creatures and destined to life eternal. But now, since there is an eternal disagreement between righteousness and sin, the sin must be taken away that the enmity may disappear. And man's sin is taken away, or atoned for, by Christ's obedience and suffering which constitute the needed satisfaction to God. "When it is asked how Christ has taken away our sins, it may be generally answered that Christ has achieved this for us by the whole course of His obedience." "From the time that He took upon Him the person of a Servant, He began to pay the price of our deliverance in order to redeem us. However, in order to set forth more clearly the manner of our redemption, Scripture ascribes this in a more peculiar and proper manner to the death of Christ . . . yet the rest of His obedience is not excluded which He exhibited in His life; for Paul includes it all from the beginning to the end when he says that He took on Him the form of a servant, and was obedient to His Father unto death, even the death of the cross." In this obedience unto death He took our guiltiness upon Himself, was presented before Pilate as a guilty man and an evil-doer, bore the reproach and shame of our sins, became subject to the curse due to us, and drew upon Himself our damnation. He descended even to hell, suffering the death which the wrath of God inflicts on transgressors, and enduring in His soul the dread torment of a soul condemned and irretrievably lost. By thus submitting to the rigour of God's vengeance, He "appeased the wrath of God, and satisfied His just judgment." "Of course," he adds, "we do not mean that God was at any moment His enemy, or angry with Him; for how could God be angry with His beloved Son? But we mean that He suffered the weight of the Divine severity; since He was stricken and afflicted by God's hand, and experienced all the tokens of an irate, punishing God." [1]

[1] Cf. *Institutes*, II, ch. xvi. One may compare with this the teaching of the "Scottish Confession" drawn up by Knox. "We believe that our Lord Jesus offered Himself a voluntary sacrifice unto His Father for us; that He suffered the contradiction of sinners; that

Comparing this doctrine of atonement with the Anselmic theory, one notices that the modification of the conception of satisfaction bears both on the idea of God which underlies the doctrine, and on the nature of the satisfaction rendered to him. The Reformation doctrine starts from a somewhat more adequate conception of God. The necessity of the satisfaction is here based, not on the insulted honour of God, but on the wrath of a just and righteous Judge, who, though He loves men, hates them for their sin and can extend forgiveness to them only when the claims of His moral law have been satisfied. The nature of the satisfaction is also construed differently, although both doctrines agree in representing Christ's work as one of vicarious obedience. For Anselm had no thought of a vicarious *punishment*; the only alternatives he considered were whether man should himself suffer endless punishment for his sin, or whether he should render (in Christ's person) some deed of satisfaction or merit. The alternatives which presented themselves to Calvin's mind were either the punishment of the sinner or the punishment of the substitute. And conceiving Christ as our substitute in punishment, he was led to depict the sufferings of Christ as the exact parallel of man's punishment, including the wrath of God, the pains of death and even the woes of hell.[1]

In spite of these striking differences, however, the essential similarity is not to be denied. While the

He was wounded and plagued for our transgressions; that He, being the clean and innocent Lamb of God, was condemned in the presence of an earthly judge, that we might be absolved before the tribunal-seat of our God; that He suffered not only the cruel death of the cross (which was accursed by the sentence of God), but also that He suffered for a season the wrath of His Father, which sinners had deserved. But yet we avow that He remained the only well-beloved and blessed Son of His Father, even in the midst of His anguish and torment, which He suffered in body and soul to make full satisfaction for the sins of His people."

[1] The question was later discussed whether Christ suffered the very punishment man's sin had entailed, or only such punishment as was equivalent in value—whether "idem," or "tantundem." Calvin obviously tended to make the sufferings of Christ as nearly as possible the "idem" of man's penalty. In this he was followed by others; but later theologians have omitted the feature of hell-torment, and have adopted the "tantundem" or equivalence theory.

Reformers carried the doctrine out of the sphere of private law into the sphere of public jurisprudence, it is still the juridic conception that dominates their thought. Both doctrines alike are based on an abstract theory as to what God's honour or law demands; both rest on the conception that Christ's death has paid God for man's offences, and bought off God's enmity; both alike presuppose a dualism in God's attitude to man, and thus seem to indicate an irreconcilable dualism in God's character.

Without involving ourselves in the details of the further development of Reformation doctrine, we may notice, first, the appearance of a new distinction between Christ's active and passive obedience, and secondly, the long drawn-out controversy—waged from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century—on the extent of the atonement.

Neither Luther nor Calvin had distinguished between Christ's active obedience, or His positive fulfilment of duty; and His passive obedience, or submission to suffering and death to satisfy the law's penal requirement. Both were included in the "whole course of Christ's obedience," and the value of His righteousness lay in the significance it gave to the death on the cross. But later theologians found an advantage in separating the two aspects of Christ's obedience, and giving each an independent value. They held that Christ by His active obedience fulfilled perfectly the law which man had broken, and that the merit of such an obedience constituted the ground on which believers were clothed with the imputed righteousness of Christ. By His suffering and death, on the other hand, that is, by His passive obedience, Christ bore the punishment we deserved and thus satisfied God's retributive righteousness. By His passive obedience He atoned for sin and released man from the penalty; by His active obedience He clothed man with His own righteousness in God's sight, and so gained for him the positive reward of eternal life and blessedness.

This double doctrine was not without its difficulties. Piscator, following the tradition of Melanchthon, who had spoken almost exclusively of the vicarious suffering of Christ, denied the significance of the active obedience

as a distinct element in the satisfaction, and maintained that the sinless and righteous life of Jesus should be considered merely as giving validity to the vicarious suffering. He argued that both death and active obedience could not be required as satisfaction; and further that, since the active obedience of Christ was a matter of duty, it could not properly be regarded as vicariously meritorious. This objection, frequently repeated by theologians, was answered differently in the Lutheran and Reformed Church. The Lutherans maintained that Christ as Lord of the law was Himself above the law, so that, being under no obligation of obedience to it, His righteousness was meritorious, and part of the satisfaction rendered to God. On the other hand, the Reformed theologians conceded to Piscator that Christ's obedience to the law was a matter of duty; yet they denied the necessity of his conclusion that His fulfilment of duty could have no vicarious significance, seeing that Christ's entire life, His active and suffering obedience alike, represented His mediation with God for us. But the difficulty was not removed by these discussions; and in point of fact the conception of Christ's active obedience as an independent feature of His work has in later theology fallen into the background, and only the single penal theory remains.

Another controversy circled round the question of the extent of the atonement. To whose credit was the all-availing merit of Christ to be placed? Did Christ die for all men, or for a certain number, or for an indefinite class of mankind? Following logically their doctrine of Predestination, the Reformed theologians maintained that the atonement of Christ was from the beginning intended for the elect, and that the result was co-extensive with the intention. The Lutherans, however, and later the Arminians, guided by a more large-hearted view of God's gracious mind, rejected this doctrine of a limited atonement; they maintained that Christ made atonement for all men, though in actual result it became effectual only in the case of those who believed. According to the one view, the atonement was limited by God's predestina-

tion, and was at the moment of Christ's death complete and efficacious for the elect; according to the other view it was intended for all, and limited in efficacy only by man's belief or unbelief. There can be little doubt which is the more logical interpretation, if the strictly penal theory is systematically presented. If Christ really died for *all*, paid the penalty for all, justice would seem to require that *all* should be pardoned, or freed from the Divine penalty.[1] The objection to such a theory of unlimited atonement was so obvious that the upholders of the theory were often led to modify it by the statement that the atonement was intended and was efficacious for an indefinite number, namely, the class of those who should hereafter believe and become members of His body, the Church. But this doctrine of an indefinite atonement was still less acceptable to the Calvinist Church; it seemed to remove all definite outlines from the theory of a substitutionary punishment, and to imply that Christ's atonement was for everybody in general and no one in particular.[2]

Yet the more logical theory of the Reformed theologians, that Christ died only for the elect, was never accepted without protest by the Reformed Church itself. The modern revised creeds of the Reformed communities differ but little from the Arminian view. In Britain the very Churches which formerly deposed some of their most eminent ministers for rejecting the doctrine of a limited atonement have at length been constrained to widen their creed in accordance with prevailing Christian sentiment. They admit that the atonement of Christ has not only a special but also a general reference. They have practically accepted the view that the atonement is indefinite in its issues; that it consists in a removal

[1] "Will God punish sin twice, first in the person of the surety, and then in the persons themselves in whose place He stood?" Dick's *Lectures on Theology*, ch. lviii.

[2] The doctrine of unlimited or of indefinite atonement is so clearly incompatible with any view of Christ's death as a quantitative equivalent of suffering, that it has often proved the stepping-stone to the Arminian view (*see* next chapter) that the sufferings of Christ were no equivalent punishment of human sin, or that they were not, properly speaking, penal at all, but rather were a substitute for penalty.

of legal barriers to forgiveness and is therefore available for all who may believe. In this case evangelical Christian feeling has burst the logic of the penal theory.

Before concluding this exposition of the Protestant penal theory, we may call attention to the way in which some of its recent defenders have developed the dual conception of God which underlies it. As we have already seen, the early Reformers emphasized, on the one hand, the grace and love of God to sinners, and, on the other hand, His wrath and just vengeance upon sin. Grace and love were regarded as belonging to God's essential character; the believer sees God as He truly is in the mirror of the gracious Saviour. For Luther wrath, hatred, and vengeance were alien to God's nature, and only necessary because of sin; and for Calvin, similarly, the pure and undeserved mercy of God was the fountain of salvation, the principle to which the whole work and merit of Christ were subordinate. In other words, these Reformers distinctly subordinated the principle of wrath or justice in God to the principle of Divine love and grace.[1] Luther even went so far as to oppose the God of the Old Testament law to the God of grace revealed in the New.[2] It does not occur to Luther that his doctrine of penal atonement is hardly to be harmonized with such a conception of God. For though this atonement has its source in the God of grace, it is really offered in satisfaction to the God of

[1] Cf. Ritschl: "The juristic conception of Christ's satisfaction was originally designed only as a condition of the assurance of justification in Christ; while the Reformers recognized the grace of God as the leading term of the religious consciousness, and His justice (or wrath) to which satisfaction must be rendered, as the subordinate principle in accordance with which the bestowal of grace through Christ had to be procured. In the subsequent period this view of the relation was reversed" (*Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, I, 6).

[2] "Moses and the prophets have preached to us, but in them we do not hear God Himself; for Moses received the law from angels, and so he has a lesser authority. When I listen, therefore, to Moses who enjoins good works, I listen to him as one who carries out an emperor's or prince's command and instruction. But that is not the same as listening to God Himself. For when God Himself speaks to men, they hear nothing but pure grace, compassion, and all that is good." Quoted from Hagenbach's *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 553.

the law; and thus, in the process of atonement itself, the God of law is once more brought into the foreground.

The later movement of thought on this question was logically inevitable. As the first step to revision we find the justice of God co-ordinated with His love; and now in recent times the justice of God has been advanced to the supreme place. Thus Dr. Shedd and Dr. Hodge, two of the most prominent mainstays of this theory, have gone the length of making retributive justice the essential attribute of God, and treating God's love and grace as subordinate and accidental. According to Dr. Shedd, justice, taking the form of wrath in relation to sin, is essential to God's being; whereas benevolence and mercy are only dispositions of His will, which He may or may not indulge. "Retributive justice is necessary in its operation. The claim of law upon the transgressor is absolute and indefeasible. The eternal Judge may or may not exercise mercy, but He must exercise justice." Again he says that wrath and mercy are, in God, opposite but compatible emotions; for the one is part of God's constitution, while the other is a quality of His will. "The two emotions are discriminated from each other by the fact that one of them is constitutional and the other is voluntary. The Divine wrath issues from the necessary antagonism between the pure essence of the Godhead and moral evil. It is therefore natural, organic, necessary and eternal. The logical idea of the Holy implies it. But the love of benevolence, or the Divine compassion, issues from the voluntary disposition of God—from His heart and affections. It is good-will."[1] Put into simple language, this means that God is essentially the Judge; He is not, essentially, the Father. He is essentially the God of the law; He may or may not show Himself as the God of grace. The supreme unalterable law of the Divine activity is "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"—a law which, Dr. Shedd strangely asserts, was approved and sanctioned by Christ Himself. Similar principles are set forth by

[1] Cf. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, I, 373–380; II, 436. Cp. Hodge, *Atonement*, p. 54.

Dr. Hodge and others; and in harmony with these principles the doctrine of a penal satisfaction is logically elaborated. God must punish the sinner, but He also desires to save the sinner; hence the scheme of atonement. The eternal justice is satisfied by the death of the innocent substitute; and so the guilty sinner, having paid by proxy his debt of penalty, and having accepted the substitute by faith, is forgiven his sins and restored to Divine favour. One may well question whether this new logic has really added to the strength of the theory; or whether, on the contrary, the exaggeration it contains, in making God's justice superior to His love, may not have largely helped to bring the theory into disrepute.

The main criticisms I would offer of this modern penal theory are, first, that it is based on conceptions of God which belong properly to nomistic religion, and, further, that its apparent logic is unsound. The underlying conception of God is unchristian, and, we may add, unphilosophical. It is an unchristian conception; the God it portrays is not the God and Father of Jesus Christ. It is not the God of the Old Testament, much less of the New. The God of the Old Testament does not always insist on His pound of flesh. His covenant grace and forgiveness are even more fundamental than His wrath and judgment. The prophet, whose saying is often quoted by the defenders of this theory, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," adds in the very same breath a supplementary thought which overthrows the principle of inexorable retributive justice when he says, "But, if he turn from all his sins, he shall surely live, he shall not die."[1] Further, this logical scheme of thought is not quite so logical as it seems; for the conclusions do not follow from the premises. If God is of so inexorable a justice that sin involves eternal death to the sinner, then no salvation is possible; and that because on strict principles of justice no substitution is possible. Adhere strictly to the proposition, "The soul that sinneth *it* shall die," as expressing the inexorable necessity of eternal justice, and no deed of satisfaction, or act of penitence, or work

[1] Ezek. xviii. 20, 21.

of penal atonement can avail to save the soul from death. The Shylock principle here defeats itself.

While we thus criticize the logic of the theory, we willingly recognize that many who accepted it, and read the cross by the light of it, learned many valuable truths. That God, the Father of grace, nevertheless hates sin with an endless hatred; that He cannot merely ignore it; that His love has provided a remedy in the cross through which we are saved; and that we are redeemed by God's grace in Christ without any merit on our part—these are truths conspicuously emphasized in this theory, and true to all time. Further, it may help to explain the continuance of the inadequate theory, if we remember that most men still pass through the nomistic stage in morals and religion, where the Divine moral government, with its associated rewards and penalties, stands as the supreme category of thought. In the transition to a higher faith, this doctrine of a punishment borne for us, and a law satisfied, has often proved a stepping-stone to a living faith in the unmerited grace of heaven. Yet it remains true that the scheme of redemption here outlined is itself but a stepping-stone to a more adequate theory, in which the character of God will be truly set forth as well as the work of Jesus Christ, the Mediator of His grace.

CHAPTER X

SOCINIAN AND ARMINIAN THEORIES

We pass next to consider the theories of those who stood largely outside the main current of Protestant thought, and who either absolutely rejected the penal theory, or sought so to modify it as to remove its outstanding difficulties.

The Socinian views of redemption were wrought out in conscious opposition to the theory of the Reformation Churches. We may begin by noticing the criticism of the penal theory; for here, as elsewhere, the Socinian theology was more powerful in its negations than in its own positive construction.

Faustus Socinus started from the conception of God as Sovereign Will, explaining this in the Scotist fashion as implying that God is above all the laws He has made.[1] Of this Will justice and mercy are to be regarded as co-ordinate and harmonious operations. The penal theory is condemned from the start as implying a contrariety between God's justice and His grace. There is in reality no such antagonism; for God's justice is, when properly understood, simply His equity and general rectitude, which acts in perfect harmony with His mercy and goodness, and reveals itself both in pardoning and in punishing. There is in God no such justice as absolutely requires the punishment of sin; for God's justice is entirely subject to His will. "The sort of justice which

[1] As Ritschl points out, the Reformers themselves were affected by the same absolutist doctrine in their view of God's double predestination, which they referred to the hidden will of God. In their doctrine of Christ's work, however, they regarded God's law as no merely arbitrary outflow of His will, but as part of its abiding and essential content.

only shows itself in punishing sin, is not dignified in Scripture by the name of justice; it is called by Scripture God's severity, vengeance, wrath, fury, indignation, or other names of that kind. Those have gravely erred, therefore, who deceived by the vulgar use of words, have declared it to be an abiding and infinite quality in God. And they have not perceived that, if this were true, God would be an avenger infinitely severe, and would never be able to pardon at all. It would be nearer the mark to say that mercy, the very opposite of such a justice, was God's proper quality. But in truth both conceptions are equally erroneous. For just as that justice, commonly so-called, which is opposed to mercy, is not a quality of God but only an effect of His will; so the mercy which is opposed to that justice, is not, properly speaking, a quality of God, but only an effect of His will."[1]

Seeing, then, that the operations of God's will are perfectly harmonious, and act in thorough unison, no scheme of redemption can be accepted which presupposes a discord in God. God can punish if He will; and He can forgive, or remit punishment, if He will. But there is one thing God cannot do—and this is another criticism of the penal theory—He cannot punish and forgive at one and the same time. Forgiveness and punishment exclude each other; if God forgives He does not punish, and where He punishes He does not forgive. The theory of a penal satisfaction is thus inconsistent with its own presupposed conception of justice; for if justice absolutely demands punishment, it absolutely excludes forgiveness. Such justice cannot admit of substitution; it demands that the guilty shall be punished, and that the innocent shall not be punished. One man can pay another's debt, but sin is a personal thing; it is non-transferable, and must be punished in the person of the sinner, if punished at all. Again, in the further carrying out of the scheme of penal atonement, the justice appealed to comes short in another way; for Christ's death cannot be taken as equivalent to the eternal death which man deserves. Finally, if it were true that Christ could and

[1] *Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum*, I, p. 566.

did bear our punishment, there ought to be no further talk of forgiveness. In point of justice, if God has already punished, He shows no forgiving grace in letting man go free; for He will have no right to act otherwise.

For those who insist on applying strict juristic conceptions to Christ's atonement, this negative criticism is almost entirely justified. It is true, the conception of God as sovereign Will is equally unsatisfactory with that of God as sovereign Law. Yet the contention that God's justice and His mercy are co-ordinate and harmonious features of God's character is at least more acceptable than the doctrine that God's justice is a matter of necessity and His mercy only a matter of option. It is true again, as we have seen, that the Reformation doctrine contains other features than the juristic. Yet when taken in its purely juristic aspect, the Socinian objections to it are in the main unanswerable Not only are they repeated by critics of the theory in our own day, but they are frankly acknowledged to be serious difficulties even by those who defend the theory. Those who bore the brunt of the Socinian criticism in the seventeenth century were often obliged to confess that the doctrine of a penal atonement could not be rationalized, and that it must be accepted on grounds of revelation.[1] And similarly many modern defenders of the penal theory have declared that it is a mystery beyond human reason. One writer (Dr. Crawford) declares that the doctrine is a "pure matter of revelation," and that we cannot fully explain the rationale of the Divine procedure; while another (Dr. Smeaton) holds that we must accept the fact as given by revelation, though all human analogies fail us for the understanding of it, and that "to give reasons argues a pretension to knowledge which is not given us." This confession of the super-rational or irrational character of the penal juristic scheme may well incline us to doubt whether the death of Christ is properly to be conceived by abstract and forensic categories. When reason finds itself barred in one direction, it is surely time to revise the presuppositions that have led to the cul-de-sac of reasoning.

[1] Cp. *Ritschl*, I, 46.

But if the Socinians were largely successful in their criticism of the prevailing penal theory, they furnish little in the way of a constructive interpretation of the cross. For Socinus the work of Christ was mainly that of teacher and prophet, and salvation is found by those who accept His teaching and follow His example. He says: "Christ is the Saviour of believers because by His example He moves and induces them to hold to the way of salvation on which they have entered. But how would He have been able by His example to move and induce His followers to stand fast in such unique righteousness and purity, unless He had first Himself tasted the cruel death which often accompanies such a path?"[1] In other words, Christ has, by His life and teaching, set His followers in the way of salvation which is the way of honesty and righteousness, and by His death He further inspires them to endure in well-doing. If we ask how Christ atoned by His death so as to remove guilt and penalty, the answer of Socinus is still the same, except that he includes in Christ's teaching a Divine promise of pardon to the repentant. "Christ takes away sins, that is, effects our deliverance from the punishment of them, in that He was absolutely the first (?) in God's name to offer the pardon of all sins, even the most grievous, to all who should repent as He required, and confirmed this offer by a perpetual covenant. Christ takes away sins because He invites all, and is able by His heavenly and most ample promises to move all, to exercise the penitence by which sins are blotted out. He takes away sins because He makes us cease from sinning by His doctrine and its wonderful confirmation. Finally, He takes away sins, because by the example of His most pure life He leads all whose case is not hopeless to quit their sins and embrace the pursuit of righteousness and holiness."[2] Christ's teaching strikes the note of the evangel, for it declares the Divine promise of a free pardon to those who repent and turn from their sins. And Christ's death is not only an example of endurance, but it sets the seal on

[1] *Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum*, I, 667.
[2] *Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum*, I, 591.

God's gracious promise, and moves us to accept His offered pardon. "Though the intervention of the blood of Christ did not move God to grant us exemption from the punishment of our sins, nevertheless it has moved us to accept the pardon offered, and to put our faith in Christ Himself—whence comes our justification—and has also in the highest way commended to us the ineffable love of God."[1] Similarly, the resurrection of Christ is viewed as a demonstration of the truth of Christ's teaching and of His promises. "Christ died because it was by death that He attained to the resurrection, from which springs the clearest confirmation of the Divine will, and the surer persuasion of our own resurrection and attainment of eternal life." Finally, there is even some suggestion that the death of Christ has some availing power with God. "Christ died in order to establish and maintain the new and eternal Divine covenant of which He was the Mediator. And thus He confirmed the Divine promises in such a way as to bind God Himself, so to speak, to bestow them upon us; and His blood cries unceasingly to the Father that He will be pleased to remember the promises which Christ proclaimed in His name, and for the confirming of which He did not hesitate to pour out His blood."[2]

In this presentation of Christ's work, the religious values are reduced as far as possible to commonplace moral and intellectual values. Christ is the moral teacher, who has clarified our moral ideals, and in God's name announced the forgiveness of sins to all who repent and turn to righteousness. The way of salvation is the way of righteousness, illumined by the faith, of which Christ has given us assurance, that our past sins will be forgiven if we turn from them and live a renewed life. Christ's life has its value as an illuminating and inspiring example of goodness and as a testimony to the promise of Divine forgiveness. Christ's death has the same value; it is an example of moral endurance, and a confirmation of

[1] *De Jesu Christo Servatore*, Part II, ch. ii.

[2] *De Jesu Christo Servatore*, Part I, ch. iii. *Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum*, II, 127.

His teaching. Christ was the prophet of great truths; He was more than a prophet in that He exemplified them to the full, and sealed them with His blood.

In such a scheme of thought, the Christian religion seems to be reduced once more to the level of a nomistic faith, and salvation to an ethical training. There is no word here of a real atonement, or reconciliation with God as directly secured by faith; salvation comes through repentance and renewal in righteousness, and is thus only progressively realized. It is true, Socinus lays weight on Christ's announcement of forgiveness and eternal life; but that is only an announcement, a promise or doctrine to be believed. It is not the Christian doctrine that God's prevenient grace and forgiveness are ours from the very start of the new life, but only the doctrine, common to all nomistic religion, that forgiveness follows upon righteousness. It is not a doctrine of the forgiveness of sinners; for the forgiveness is only promised to those who have ceased from sinning and become righteous; and since such a condition is never perfectly fulfilled, the forgiveness remains a promise, and never becomes reality. Such a theory falls short of the evangelical teaching of Protestantism, which has always striven to present the forgiveness of sins, not merely as a promise for the future, but as a present and abiding reality grasped by faith.

We pass next to the Arminian development of doctrine, which may fairly be regarded as a compromise between the strictly penal view of Calvinism and the opposed doctrine of the Socinians. James Arminius himsel fwas entirely occupied with the Predestination controversy, in which he defended the milder view of conditional decrees; and consequently he did not work out the modified doctrine of atonement which his revision of Calvinism made necessary. The following picture, however, will sufficiently indicate his general view. In a treatise on the Priesthood of Christ and the causes that made it necessary, he says:—

"*Justice* demanded on her part the punishment due

to her from a sinful creature; and this demand she emphasized the more forcibly because of the equity with which she had threatened it, and the clearness with which it had been openly foretold and declared. *Gracious Mercy*, like a pious mother moved with compassion, desired to avert a punishment that meant the utmost misery of the creature. For she thought that, though the remission of the punishment was not due to the cause of it, yet such a favour ought to be granted to her, because it was one of her chief properties to 'rejoice against judgment.' *Justice*, tenacious of her purpose, rejoined that while the throne of grace was elevated far above the tribunal of justice, she could not bear with patient indifference that no regard should be paid to her, and that the task of managing the whole affair be transferred to Mercy. Since, however, it was part of the oath administered to Justice, when she entered into office, that she should 'render to every one his due,' she would yield entirely to Mercy, provided a method could be devised by which her own inflexibility could be declared as well as her extreme hatred of sin.

"But to find out that method was not the province of Mercy. It was necessary, therefore, to call in the aid of *Wisdom* to adjust the mighty difference, and to reconcile in an amicable union those two combatants that were, in God, the supreme protectresses of all equity and goodness. She came when called, and at once discovered a method. She affirmed that it was possible to render to each of them what belonged to her; for if the punishment due to sin appeared desirable to Justice and odious to Mercy, it might be transmuted into an expiatory sacrifice, the offering of which in the voluntary suffering of death (the punishment adjudged to sin) might appease Justice, and open such a way for Mercy as she had desired."[1]

In this pictorial statement of the doctrine there is little that even the strict Calvinist would be inclined to criticize; for any deviations from the rigid penal theory are rather smoothed over than sharply emphasized. Justice is depicted in milder terms than usual. It

[1] *Works of Arminius*, I, 349.

recognizes that the throne of grace is supreme, and that something is due to mercy. It not only consents to the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, but is appeased by an expiatory sacrifice, which, though it takes the form of death (and so of punishment), is not characterized as in any way equivalent to the suffering due on account of man's sin, but, more generally, as something which suffices to show God's inflexible righteousness and His hatred of sin.

A much more precise statement of the doctrine of the Arminian body is that made by Hugo Grotius. He was a jurist and politician, the friend of Oldenbarnevelt, who headed the Remonstrant party in Holland. As in his public life Grotius endeavoured to mediate between the contending parties in Holland, so in his theology he sought to mediate between the strict Calvinists and some of the Remonstrants who were tending to Socinian views. In 1617 he published at Leyden a *Defence of the Catholic Faith on the Satisfaction of Christ against F. Socinus,* in which he expounded the principles which have largely guided the Arminian Church.

Conceding to the Socinians the strength of their criticism on some of the outworks of the atonement theory, Grotius maintains that the substance of the Catholic faith still remains unshaken, and that the theory of Socinus regarding Christ's death is wholly inadequate. The death of Christ was an example to men and a confirmation of His teaching; but it was much more. The emphasis laid upon it in Scripture implies that it had a unique significance; and the Catholic doctrine fairly sets forth that significance. "The Catholic doctrine is, that God was moved by His own goodness to bless us; but since our sins, which were deserving of punishment, stood in the way of this, He ordained that Christ (who was willing because of His love to men) should pay the penalty for our sins by submitting to the most cruel torture and to ignominious death, in order that without prejudice to the exhibition of Divine justice we might be freed by faith from the punishment of eternal death."[1]

[1] *Defensio Fidei,* ch. i.

In support of this general faith of the churches, Grotius defends the idea of substitution; but in the defence he is impelled by the Socinian criticism to modify the concept of Divine justice. The fact that substitution is permissible at all implies that justice does not invariably require the punishment of the sinner himself; the strict law can be so far relaxed that a substitute may bear the punishment. Scripture and history both witness to the fact that, just as rewards are bestowed on the children and kinsmen of the well-deserving, so punishment is frequently meted out to the kinsmen of those who have offended. We must bring our idea of Divine justice into accordance with these facts. Accordingly Grotius endeavours to find an expression for God's relation to man which is more appropriate than that of a legal Judge or an Absolute Sovereign. The justice of God cannot be compared to that of a legally constituted judge, which absolutely requires so much punishment for so much sin, and allows no transference of the penalty. "He who is a judge would be unable to liberate the guilty from penalty, even by transferring the penalty to another; not because that is in itself unjust, but because it does not harmonize with the law of which he is the appointed minister." Nor, again, is the justice of God to be conceived as that of an absolute sovereign, for one who has absolute dominion seeks his own ends; whereas "the true function of punishing does not exist for the sake of him that punishes, but for the sake of some community. For all punishment has for its end the common good: to preserve order and warn by example."[1] Hence the justice of God is most fitly conceived as the righteousness of a moral Governor (Rector), who seeks even in punishing the good of the governed. All penal law flows from the will of God and serves the end of his Rectoral Righteousness.

Now to apply these principles. The definite law has been proclaimed that sin will be punished by the endless death of the sinner; but, were this law to be judicially and strictly executed, all mankind would perish. This

[1] *Defensio Fidei*, ch. ii.

law, however, may be relaxed ; the ends of God's government will be equally served if such punishment is exacted as will prove that God does not look lightly on sin. This need is met by the death of Christ. If God had not punished at all, but had remitted the penalty entirely, such weak indulgence would have ruined His government. Something was necessary for man's sake ; God's clemency must be shown under such conditions as would prove His condemnation of sin. It would not be fitting for God, as moral Governor, to remit man's sin without giving a conspicuous example of His judgment upon it. In what way this should be done was a matter of God's will. He actually chose the form of a vicarious punishment as the most suitable for displaying His righteousness previous to forgiving our sins. The death of Christ is a Governmental Display in which God accompanies His message of forgiveness with an exhibition of His righteous dealing with sin.

On this view of the matter there is no question of equivalent punishment, and still less of identical punishment ; all that is needed is that some adequate expression be given to God's condemnation of sin. And therefore, argues Grotius, the Socinian objection, that punishment and forgiveness are incompatible, loses its point ; for God's grace is seen in the relaxation of the law, namely, in accepting the sufferings of Christ in lieu of man's eternal punishment, and also in lieu of any exact equivalent of punishment. " The same act of God which is, in respect of the law, a relaxation or dispensation, is, in respect of the offender, remission." Christ did not pay the full equivalent of our penalty ; but He satisfied God for our sins, and fulfilled a condition which God graciously accepted as sufficient.[1]

The radical difference between this theory of Grotius and that of the Calvinist Church is that the significance of Christ's death is here found, not in satisfying an abstract Divine justice which *must* punish without regard to any further end, but in showing forth God's righteousness for man's sake, that he may be impressed with God's

[1] *Defensio Fidei*, ch. vi.

abhorrence of sin and His determination to do away with it, and thus be restrained from sinning in future. The difference represents a distinct advance upon the older theory. It is a clear gain to theology to rid it of the abstract conception of a justice which must punish, and which is satisfied with punishment as such, and to put in its place the thought of a rectoral justice which is guided in its exercise by wise consideration of the moral ends of government. It is also a relief to be no longer obliged to prove that Christ's sufferings were an exact equivalent of all that human sin deserved.

But in the working out of this theory Grotius has substituted, for the theory he rejects, a much more unworthy and equally incredible view of God's work in Christ. Instead of seeing in Christ's death the dramatic spectacle of eternal justice with its awful requirement of condign punishment of sin, we are asked to conceive of God as an astute ruler who has first promulgated a law, then seeing that it would involve all mankind in destruction, discovers an expedient for safeguarding the law while relaxing its demands. And what is the nature of this expedient? In order to impress men with the gravity of sin, the wise governor will not forgive without making a penal example of somebody; and strange to say, in making this governmental display He selects as the victim the one person who was innocent! Further, if the intention of the cross was to frighten men out of their sins, must it not be said that it has entirely failed of its end? For what believer from the first to the seventeenth century ever interpreted the cross in this light or imagined that God had made of Christ a penal example to deter men from sin?

The difficulty here is so obvious that other Arminians, while retaining the main framework of the theory and the thought of a demonstration of Divine justice, have sought to modify the conception of what constituted the demonstration. The objection that a partial vicarious punishment is no more acceptable from the point of view of a rectoral government, than is a plenary vicarious punishment from the point of view of an abstract absolute

justice, led to the modified view that the sufferings of Christ were not, properly speaking, punishment, but were rather something offered to God in lieu of punishment. So LIMBORCH and CURCELLÆUS, two of the earlier Arminians, maintained that Christ's death should be conceived as a sacrifice rather than a penal example. It was a propitiatory offering, to be construed on the analogy of the ancient sacrifices for sin, which were not substitutionary penal offerings, but oblations meant to move God to pity, and so to secure the remission of the sins confessed. In ordaining such sacrifices, God showed also His hatred of sin, seeing that He required from man some sacrifice or suffering that should precede and warrant His forgiveness. Limborch does not refuse to speak of Christ's sacrifice as an exemplary punishment; but it is really only a quasi-punishment. "The death borne by Christ has the meaning of a grievous suffering imposed on Christ, by which He as it were (*quasi*) took on Himself the punishment due to our sins, and, by this His passion, made propitiation to God." And God "accepted that blood as equal to a full payment for our sins, and permitted Himself to be moved by it and to grant us the full remission of sins."[1]

Following up these suggestions, later Arminians have adopted the modified theory that the death of Christ represents not a literal punishment of sin, but rather a propitiation in which the righteousness of God is declared, His moral law safeguarded, and the obstacles to forgiveness removed. The Calvinistic Churches have steadily moved in the same direction. In the first place, Calvin's conception of the sufferings of Christ as being exactly and literally the same penalty as that which man deserved, was gradually abandoned; the "idem" was replaced by the "tantundem." Then, too, Christian sentiment broke through the more rigid doctrine that Christ suffered the punishment of the elect only, and the doctrine of an unlimited or universal atonement came into vogue. But the logic of thought inevitably drove men further. If Christ bore the punishment due to the sins of the whole

[1] Cf. *Ritschl*, I, 47.

world, then punishment is no longer due in any case, and hell is thus emptied of its inhabitants. The Calvinists were not prepared for such a happy conclusion; they went back upon their own premises. The sufferings of Christ could not be equivalent to the punishment due by all men; and if they have still a universal significance, that significance must lie in something else than punishment. They were not literal punishment, then, but some propitiation in lieu of punishment, which, while safeguarding the moral order, would enable God to grant a free forgiveness to all who believe.

Thus the Calvinist and the Arminian have once more joined hands, so far as the meaning of the atonement is concerned. Their conjoint view may be fairly outlined as follows. The older conception of a legal or juristic penal atonement is not self-consistent, and must be abandoned; for on strict principles of retribution no substitution is possible. The atonement of Christ is rather a substitute for the law's penalty, in which the strict law is superseded and overruled. The satisfaction of Christ was made, not to retributive justice, but to God's rectoral or public justice. "The ground design is to preserve unsullied the glory of the great principles of eternal rectitude; to show the impossibility of the demands of equity, founded in these principles and essential to the government of the universe, being dispensed with; to settle in the minds of God's intelligent creatures, as the subjects of His moral administration, the paramount obligation and immutable permanence of their claims; to give such a manifestation of the Divine regard to these elements as to preclude the possibility of any the remotest surmise that in the pardon of sin they have been at all overlooked or placed in abeyance; and thus, to render it consistent with Divine propriety, or in other words, honourable to the whole character, as well as to the law and government of Jehovah, to extend pardoning mercy to the guilty and to reinstate them in His favour."[1] Or, as another puts it: "The Atonement is represented by the Scriptures, not as a bribe for exciting

[1] Dr. Wardlaw, *Discourses on Atonement.*

Divine love, but as a medium for exercising it; not as a motive to induce God to be gracious, but as the means for expressing Himself as gracious; not as a commercial payment making release due, but as an honourable ground for making pardon admissible and safe." "The sufferings of Christ answer the same 'end of the law' as would have been served by the destruction of the transgressors themselves." "The death of Christ magnifies the law and makes it honourable in the sight of the universe as holy, just and good, both in its counsels and in its threatenings. It is a demonstration of God's justice, as it shows that He would not exercise even His mercy without an expedient to honour His justice, though at the cost of the sufferings of His illustrious Son." "Thus the death of Christ tends to deter men from breaking the law, and answers the ends of punishment." "An impression of the evil of sin is calculated to be made by the Atonement, by its showing at what infinite expense God has been to oppose its progress."[1]

This later doctrine is couched in less precise terms than the view of Grotius; but it is substantially the same doctrine of a Governmental display; the only difference being that, while the older Arminians held to vicarious punishment, the newer form of the theory regards the sacrifice of Christ as something that is as good as punishment, but is not punishment. And the same objection applies to this variety of the theory, and with even greater force. How can the law be said to be safeguarded, or the Divine righteousness to be magnified, unless its (supposed) provisions are faithfully and precisely executed? So far from teaching the impossibility of the demands of the law being dispensed with, and that sin and punishment are eternally conjoined, the lesson of the cross, as here interpreted, is rather the reverse; for it now appears that, while God threatens sin with condign punishment, He can find expedients for not executing His threats, and that, in fact, He can and does forgive sin without punishment, whether personal or vicarious. And those who look deeper into these modifications of the

[1] Jenkyn, *The Extent of the Atonement*.

penal theory may learn a further lesson. The failure of this theory in its various forms may suggest that the death of Christ has quite another significance than that of punishment, or of what is equivalent to punishment; that salvation is not at all concerned with the exacting or the remitting of punishment; that the forgiveness of sins is not really understood till we cease to identify it with remission of external penalties, here or hereafter. If, as the later theory suggests, the view of Christ's death as penalty is misleading, why should we continue to retain the old framework of that theory?

But the remaining defenders of the semi-penal satisfaction theory in modern times are not prepared for such a surrender. While asserting frankly that juristic categories are inadequate, and that it is a mistake to give a directly penal significance to Christ's death, they still persist in viewing it as though it were a satisfaction to God's punitive righteousness, and, if not punishment, of the same significance as punishment; since it asserts the principle that sin and punishment are conjoined, and thus opens to God a safe and honourable way to exercise forgiveness. While criticizing the theories of satisfaction in details, they are still held by traditional regard for the system of "Satisfaction," and strive to pour their new wine into old bottles. This assertion will be illustrated by the theories of two well-known writers of the present day—Dr. Dale and Dr. Denney.

The general thesis of Dr. Dale is that the death of Christ forms the objective ground of the remission of sins, because therein is revealed a righteousness of God which must otherwise have been revealed in the infliction of the penalties of sin upon the human race. This might be understood in a sense consistent with any satisfaction theory. The special point of Dale's thought comes into view when he insists that the special revelation of God's righteousness does not consist in inflicting the penalty for sin, but in providing a substitute for penalty. All sin deserves punishment, according to the eternal laws of righteousness, with which God's will is one. God cannot, and will not, suppress the principle that suffering is the

just desert of sin. But He may assert this principle, and reveal His righteousness, in various ways; it is sufficient that the principle be asserted and maintained. "If God does not assert the principle that sin deserves punishment by punishing it, He must assert that principle in some other way. Some Divine act is required which shall have all the moral worth and significance of the act by which the penalties of sin would have been inflicted on the sinner. The Christian atonement is the fulfilment of that necessity. The principle that suffering—suffering of the most terrible kind—is the just desert of sin is not suppressed. It would have been adequately asserted had God inflicted on man the penalties of transgression. It is asserted in still grander form, and by a Divine act, which in its awful sublimity and unique glory infinitely transcends the mere infliction of suffering on those who have sinned. The penalties are not simply held back by the strong hand of infinite love. He, on whom the sin of men had brought the dread necessity of asserting the principle that they deserved to suffer, and who, as it seems, could not decline to assert it—He, through whose lips the sentence of the eternal law of righteousness must have come, condemning those who had sinned to exile from the light and life of God—He, by whose power the sentence must have been executed—He Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, laid aside His eternal glory, assumed our nature, was forsaken of God, died on the cross that the sins of men might be remitted. It belonged to Him to assert by His own act that suffering is the just result of sin. He asserts it, not by inflicting suffering on the sinner, but by enduring suffering Himself." Dale emphasizes that this expedient has all the value of punishment, and does equal homage to the eternal law of righteousness. "If in any case the penalties of sin are remitted, some other act of at least equal intensity, and in which the ill desert of sin is expressed with at least equal energy, must take its place." And he adds (in a note) that "as much as this might be concluded *a priori*."[1]

This theory is substantially the Governmental theory of

[1] *The Atonement*, pp. 391, 392.

Grotius, in slightly modified terms. The Divine justice of Dale's theory which in remitting penalty must at least assert the principle that sin deserves punishment, is quite on a par with the rectoral justice of Grotius, which requires to vindicate itself in some way before sin can be forgiven. And the method taken to uphold the moral government is, on both theories, not the imposition on the substitute of a penalty equivalent to the sin of the world, but only such an imposition of suffering as will prove God's hatred of sin. Grotius calls this a vicarious punishment; Dale calls it self-inflicted suffering, but does not insist on its being punishment in the proper sense, inclining to the later Arminian view that it is rather a substitute for penalty than penalty proper.

The same position is taken by Dr. Denney. The abstract retributive justice which must punish, and if it permit of a transference of penalty, insists at least on a definite *quid pro quo*, has no place in his thought. God's relations to men are, he holds, moral and personal, not forensic or judicial or legal. While moral and personal, however, they are also universal, doing justice to certain inviolable relations in which there is "an inexorable Divine reaction against sin, expressing itself in death."[1] In applying these principles to the atonement of Christ, he says emphatically that God's forgiveness of sins is perfectly spontaneous and free, and that no one dreams of questioning this.[2] But this freeness in forgiveness is not inconsistent with the necessity of an atonement, as the medium or channel of it.[3] Forgiveness, while mediated,

[1] *Atonement and the Modern Mind*, p. 1.

[2] But a stringent satisfaction-theory denies in fact the freeness of forgiveness, though its upholders scarcely dream they are denying it. If a full and equivalent punishment merits or purchases our forgiveness, then forgiveness is not free or spontaneous; though we have not paid for it, it has been paid for in Christ's death.

[3] In an earlier work—*The Death of Christ*—Dr. Denney speaks of the atonement as the *ground* of forgiveness; but in *Atonement and the Modern Mind*, he says only that God "through the passion of His Son, ministers the forgiveness of sins." The difference is more than verbal. If the atonement makes God willing or able to forgive, it is the ground or meritorious cause of forgiveness; but if it simply expresses or conveys the Divine forgiveness to men, it may properly be called its channel or instrumental cause.

is absolutely free. "The Atonement is concerned with a different point—not the freeness of pardon, but the cost of it; not the spontaneity of God's love, which no one questions, but the necessity under which it lay to manifest itself in a particular way if God was to be true to Himself and to win the heart of sinners for the holiness which they had offended. The Atonement is not the denial that God's love is free; it is that specific manifestation or demonstration of God's free love which is demanded by the situation of man."[1] In another striking passage Dr. Denney interprets the atonement as meaning that forgiveness is possible in consistency with the law expressed in the moral constitution of the world. "The maintenance of this law or moral constitution in its inviolable integrity was the signature of the forgiveness Paul preached. The Atonement meant to him that forgiveness was mediated through One in whose life and death the most signal homage was paid to this law. The very glory of the Atonement was that it manifested the righteousness of God; it demonstrated God's consistency with His own character, which would have been violated alike by indifference to sinners, and by indifference to that universal moral order—that law of God—in which alone eternal life is possible."[2]

In this presentation of the atonement the modified Arminian doctrine is reaffirmed in its main outlines. There is no mention of a full vicarious penal satisfaction, of identical or equivalent punishment, or of any transference of merit or demerit; all such juristic categories are expressly set aside. The death of Christ is simply such a demonstration or example of the Divine justice (which insists on the recognition of the moral order) as makes the forgiveness of sins honourable and safe.

In fact, the Governmental theory is the *via media* taken to-day by many who have insuperable objections to the Calvinist penal view.[3] Many cling to the framework of

[1] *Atonement and the Modern Mind*, p. 15.

[2] *Atonement and the Modern Mind*, p. 51.

[3] For other examples of the Governmental view, cf. *Atonement in Modern Religious Thought* (Dr. Forsyth, Marcus Dods, Dr. Cave); or W. L. Walker, *The Cross and the Kingdom*, pp. 221–227, 239.

the Satisfaction theory without seeking to gain any precision of thought; as when they say that God's forgiveness is shown in Christ's death "under moral conditions," or that it is presented there to men "under safeguards." It is difficult to criticize a theory that has so dwindled in meaning as to content itself with loose and ambiguous phrases, the vague echoes of past controversy. The grave defect of such assertions is that, by purporting to be some solution of the solemn problem, they block the way of a true and adequate rationale of the death of Christ. To proclaim as the central aspect of Christ's death that it is a glorious manifestation of justice, an example of law and homage to law, or that it demonstrates the consistency of God's character, seems a terribly meagre way of explaining the vital significance of an event which has had such vast consequences for the religious life of mankind. Did the consistency of God's character require to be demonstrated? What religious mind in any age has ever denied it? Or did God's justice demand any other manifestation than that which it receives in the entire moral government of the world? These are high-sounding but rather empty phrases, which only obscure what they are meant to explain. They hide from us the real glory which believers see in the death of Christ, as the crowning act of His redeeming service.

CHAPTER XI

OTHER SATISFACTION THEORIES

FROM these unsatisfactory Satisfaction theories which may be classed as Governmental or Semi-penal, we pass on to consider other doctrines which, starting from the same general standpoint, seek by new paths to gain a deeper conception of the Divine requirement. Such are the theories of John McLeod Campbell, and, more recently, of R. C. Moberly.

J. McLEOD CAMPBELL, minister of Row in Scotland, deposed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1831 for venturing to reject the doctrine that Christ died only for the elect, and proclaiming in his pulpit the gospel of a universal atonement. In his retirement he wrote a work on *The Nature of the Atonement*, which for earnest spirituality of thought has never been surpassed.

Campbell starts from the conception which had made a "limited" atonement abhorrent to him, namely, the forgiving grace of God to mankind, as brought home to the heart through Christ's atonement. He will allow only such conceptions of God to rule his theory as are drawn from the view of that atoning work itself. The Atonement mediates the forgiving love of God to man. His forgiveness is not made by the atonement; it is the necessary presupposition of there being an atonement at all. "An Atonement to make God gracious, to move Him to compassion, to turn His heart towards those from whom sin had alienated His love, would indeed be difficult to believe in; for, if it were needed, it would be impossible."[1] "But if God provide the Atonement, then

[1] *Nature of the Atonement*, p. 17.

forgiveness must precede Atonement, and the Atonement must be the form of the manifestation of the forgiving love of God, not its cause."[1] But this does not yet solve the problem; for how was so costly an expression of love necessary? "Love cannot be conceived as doing anything gratuitously,—merely to show its own depth,—for which there was no call in the circumstances viewed in themselves. A man may love another so as to be willing to die for him; but he will not actually lay down his life merely to show his love, and without there being anything to render his doing so necessary, in order to save the life for which he yields up his own."[2] The question remains: Why must forgiving love come to us through the channel of the cross?

We may confine ourselves here to the fundamental positions of Campbell's theory, in which he illustrates the "retrospective" value of the cross. The mediation of Christ, as he teaches, has two aspects, according as we think of it as dealing with man on behalf of God, or as dealing with God on man's behalf. As dealing with man, Christ's work is essentially a manifestation of the Fatherly heart of God, and of the true life of Divine Sonship. And in this witness to the holy love of God, the sufferings of Christ bore an essential part. "It has been said, if God should appear as a man on this sinful earth, how could it be but as a man of sorrows?" Physical, as well as moral and spiritual, suffering must needs fall on one who was witnessing to the Father in a sinful world. "His honouring of the Father caused men to dishonour Him; His manifestation of brotherly love was repaid with hatred; His perfect walk in the sight of men failed to commend either His Father or Himself; His professed trust in the Father was cast up to Him, not being believed; and the bitter complaint was wrung from Him—'Reproach hath broken my heart!'" The cross thus manifests the eternal love in contrast with the enmity of the world; and God permitted and ordained this path of suffering "so as to give full and perfect development and manifestation to the self-sacrificing life of love that

[1] Page 16. [2] Page 22.

was in Christ, fulness and perfection to His declaration of the Father's name."[1]

The other element in this fundamental aspect of the cross was that in which Christ dealt with God on man's behalf. The sufferings of Christ were not only the perfecting of His witness for the Father; they represented also His bearing of man's sin before God. Not that these sufferings were penal; we cannot conceive of God's son as enduring a penal infliction in the very act of honouring His Father, and in the very sufferings in which He was witnessing to the Father's love. Yet in submitting to these sufferings Christ was giving a satisfaction to God, whose righteous wrath against sin is a reality. His suffering and sorrow represent the Divine sorrow for sin, made visible in human flesh; and this sorrow for sin, as viewed in relation to God, takes the form of a perfect confession or repentance. "That oneness of mind with the Father, which towards man took the form of condemnation of sin, would, in the Son's dealing with the Father in relation to our sins, take the form of a perfect confession of our sins. This confession as to its own nature must have been a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man. Such an Amen was due in the nature of things . . . He who would intercede for us must begin with confessing our sins . . . Christ's love to the Father, to whom He thus confessed the sin of His brethren,—His love to His brethren whose sin He confessed,—along with that conscious oneness of will with the Father in humanity, in the light of which the exceeding evil of man's alienation from God was realized; these must have rendered His confession of our sins before the Father a peculiar development of the holy sorrow in which He bore the burden of our sins, and which, like His sufferings in confessing His Father before men, had a severity and intensity of its own. . . . What is it in relation to God's wrath against sin? What place has it in Christ's dealing with that wrath? I answer: He who so responds to the Divine wrath against sin, saying, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, who judgest so,' is

[1] Pages 112, 113.

necessarily receiving the full apprehension and realization of that wrath, as well as of that sin against which it comes forth into His soul and spirit, into the bosom of the Divine humanity; and, so receiving it, he responds to it with a perfect response,—a response from the depths of that Divine humanity; and in that perfect response He absorbs it. For that response has all the elements of a perfect repentance in humanity for all the sins of man,—a perfect sorrow,—a perfect contrition,—all the elements of such a repentance, and that in absolute perfection,—all, excepting the personal consciousness of sin; and by that perfect response in Amen to the mind of God in relation to sin is the wrath of God rightly met, and that is accorded to Divine justice which is its due, and could alone satisfy it." [1]

This theory is expressly formed on the principle that God's justice requires either "equivalent punishment or equivalent sorrow and repentance"; and in deciding for the latter he makes his point clear by an illustration. "Suppose that all the sin of humanity has been committed by one human spirit, on whom is accumulated this immeasurable amount of guilt; and suppose this spirit, loaded with all this guilt, to pass out of sin into holiness and to become filled with the light of God, becoming perfectly righteous with God's own righteousness; such a change, were such a change possible, would imply in the spirit so changed a perfect condemnation of the past of its own existence, and an absolute and perfect repentance, a confession of its sin commensurate with its evil. If the sense of personal identity remained, it must be so. Now let us contemplate this repentance with reference to the guilt of such a spirit, and the question of pardon for its past sin and admission to the light of God's favour. Shall this repentance be accepted as an atonement? and, the past sin being thus confessed, shall the Divine favour flow out on that present perfect righteousness which thus condemns the past? Shall the present perfect righteousness be rejected on account of past sin, so absolutely and perfectly repented of? And shall

[1] Pages 117, 118.

Divine justice still demand adequate punishment for the past sin, and refuse to the present righteousness adequate acknowledgment,—the favour which in respect of its own nature belongs to it? It appears to me impossible to give any but one answer to these questions. We feel that such a repentance as we are supposing would, in such a case, be the true and proper satisfaction to offended justice, and that there would be more atoning worth in one tear of the true and perfect sorrow which the memory of the past would awaken in this now holy spirit, than in endless ages of penal woe. Now, with the difference of personal identity, the case I have supposed is the actual case of Christ."[1]

Here we have the heart of McLeod Campbell's theory; it lies in the centre of a wide scheme of thought, patiently and elaborately set forth in the light of Scripture and of a rich spiritual experience. It presents us with a new idea of what constitutes the vicarious satisfaction. One may recall that the philosopher Kant, when seeking to revive the Christian doctrines in terms of his own moral individualism, held that the true atonement for the sins of the past lay in the individual's contrition and repentance, in which the "new man" suffered for the sins of the "old man." Applying this to the vicarious atonement, Campbell bases his theory on the same essential idea. Mere suffering, pain as pain, cannot satisfy God or atone for sin. The suffering that has atoning value is the suffering and sorrow in which the sinner looks on his sin with the mind of God, loathing and repenting of it. The suffering of penitence can satisfy God, because it is the pledge of a new life in which sin is overcome. For, as Campbell says, the very justice of God has an aspect in which it may be viewed as craving for something else than penalty. "Justice may be contemplated as according to sin its due, and there is in righteousness, as we are conscious of it, what testifies that sin should be miserable. But justice, looking at the sinner not simply as the fit subject of punishment, but as existing in a moral condition of unrighteousness, must desire that the sinner

[1] Pages 124, 125.

should cease to be in that condition; should cease to be unrighteous, should become righteous; righteousness in God craving for righteousness in man with a craving which the realization of righteousness in man alone can satisfy."[1] To such a Divine justice repentance is a higher satisfaction than punishment could be. Taking, therefore, the true atonement to lie in contrition, confession and repentance, Campbell believes that Christ presented in His suffering and death a perfect atonement on man's behalf, and so can make intercession on the ground of His sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Substantially the same view has been presented recently by R. C. MOBERLY His work on *Atonement and Personality* is, largely, a restatement of the central position of McLeod Campbell; and the improvements suggested are more than questionable.

Dr. Moberly begins by analysing the conceptions of punishment, penitence, and forgiveness. He finds that the retributive view of punishment is one-sided, but cannot be wholly abandoned. In its ideal purpose punishment is disciplinary, but in so far as it fails to secure this purpose, it takes the form of retributive vengeance. The perfect end of punishment is achieved when it produces repentance; for penitence alone does full homage to righteousness. Forgiveness in the proper sense of the term, not as mere remission of penalty, but as the restoration to personal relationship, is only possible on condition of repentance; for only the penitent sinner is forgivable. A perfect forgiveness, therefore, is possible only to a completely penitent and renewed life. Hence it is never fully consummated till penitence has wrought itself out into perfect holiness. Otherwise it is always provisional, inchoate, anticipatory; limited by the degree of forgivableness, that is, the degree of penitence and spiritual renewal of the offender.

From this analysis he proceeds to the question of Atonement. We cannot atone for our sins; we cannot render that perfect penitence which could yield a full forgiveness. But what we cannot render, Christ has rendered in our

[1] Pages 25, 26.

name and nature. His death on the cross is not merely the crowning act of His obedience to God ; it is also the manifestation of a perfect penitence or contrition for the sin of the world. The possibility of such vicarious penitence is illustrated by the case of a mother who is broken-hearted over the irretrievable disgrace of her child. Identifying herself with her child in all the fulness of sympathy, she feels the shame as her own ; the more pure and unselfish she is, the more complete is the example she gives of vicarious sorrow and penitence. So, in the supreme example, Christ fulfilled the conditions of a perfect penitent. One in nature and sympathy with humanity, realizing also what sin is, and one with God in condemning it, His attitude was one of "penitential holiness." The cross was the climax of His life, not only perfecting His obedience, but atoning for sin by a consummation of penitence. He did not bear the punishment of sin or endure the vengeance of God ; but He bore the burden of sin by accepting voluntarily all that belongs to the consciousness of it, and all that was necessary to consummate its perfect condemnation. And just as the shame and the suffering of the afflicted mother create hope for the restoration of her child, so the sufferings of Christ are the hope of humanity, and the source of its renewal in righteousness.

The difficulty that might be raised as to the possibility of appropriating such vicarious penitence is met not only by the thought that, if we are united to Christ by faith (and the sacraments), we share in His perfect repentance ; but by a return to the doctrine of the early Greek Church that Christ resumed all humanity in his own human nature, so that He is man in a sense which is inclusive of the humanity of all other men.

While recognizing the admirable analysis Dr. Moberly has made of the conceptions involved in the Atonement, such as punishment and forgiveness, it is difficult for any one to see a real improvement here on the theory of McLeod Campbell. His view of the relation of forgiveness to penitence leads straight to the conclusion that no perfect forgiveness is secured by any individual till

he has become perfectly penitent and holy. Dr. Moberly recognizes this himself. Penitence means inward righteousness, and is always imperfect. And being imperfect, it is capable of receiving only an imperfect or provisional forgiveness. Only the sinless person can be fully forgiven. Is this, we ask, God's Evangel? is it not rather the old Socinian "promise of forgiveness" in another form? It is true Dr. Moberly thinks that this difficulty is satisfactorily solved by the perfect penitence of the sinless and holy Christ. He sees, however, that the mere imputation of that penitence is not enough; for no imputed penitence can make me perfectly penitent, and so capable of receiving a perfect forgiveness. He solves this new difficulty by the extraordinary assertion that Christ is identical with the humanity of all men, so that His perfect penitence is really ours; and he finds it a grave defect in Campbell's view that he has not realized that "Christ *was* humanity perfectly penitent, humanity perfectly righteous."[1] It was not merely because Christ sympathized with men that He suffered and confessed their sins on the cross, but because He Himself was humanity. In other words, Dr. Moberly thinks to save himself from his own dilemma by returning to the old abstract Greek theory that Christ having assumed human nature includes all mankind in His own being. But not even this solecism of thought avails to solve the problem. For if Christ is humanity, and if thus humanity has rendered the perfect penitence due, then humanity is perfectly redeemed, and all mankind enjoy the forgiveness of their sins. Or, if humanity is not to be identified with mankind, the individuals of humanity, then none are redeemed and have their sins forgiven; their forgiveness depends on their forgivableness, and that can be only gradually and painfully attained by their own gradual, and ever imperfect, repentance.

Returning to McLeod Campbell's theory, it is obvious that, while protesting against the view of a penal juristic satisfaction to God, he is still controlled in his thinking by the idea of satisfaction, and therefore retains the old

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, p. 404.

framework of thought. If Christ did not offer on our behalf a penal equivalent, He must have offered something in the way of satisfaction. We owe to God at least that we should repent of our sins; and since we cannot satisfy God perfectly in this respect, Christ has presented this satisfaction in our stead. His sufferings are "vicarious, expiatory, an atonement," and in this intervention we see "the grounds of the Divine procedure in granting to us the remission of our sins, and the gift of eternal life."[1] It is true he labours industriously to remove the impression made by his theory that there is any legal or moral fiction in God's gracious dealing; and he repudiates the idea that Christ's repentance or confession to the Father is a substitute for our repentance. It is only when Christ's sacrifice enables us directly to share in His repentance, that it avails for us. But if, as Campbell maintains, Christ's repentance (not ours) is the ground of the Divine procedure in remitting our sins, the fiction still remains that we are pardoned, without having perfectly repented, on the ground of a vicarious repentance. We may rejoice in this inconsistency as showing that Campbell's mind worked uneasily within the old satisfaction framework. It certainly shows an advance on the older doctrine to affirm that a perfect repentance for sin will satisfy God better than any "equivalent punishment." But the conception of a legal satisfaction attaches to both theories. Campbell has transformed the common faith that God forgives the repentant sinner into the legal doctrine that the forgiveness of sins presupposes, and is grounded on, a perfect repentance; on this legal basis he interprets the death of Christ as rendering on man's behalf the necessary "equivalent repentance."

There are two outstanding objections to the theory here presented. The first is that God makes no such impossible demand on frail humanity—that is, He does not require a perfect repentance as a condition of His forgiving grace. The Gospel of Christ teaches a very different truth. The father of the prodigal son does not measure out his forgiveness to the erring, returning sinner according to the degree of his penitence; he does

[1] *Nature of the Atonement*, pp. 121, 152.

not wait for signs of a "perfect penitence" in his son before granting a full forgiveness; does not even talk of forgiveness at all, but shows it in all his actions and assumes it in his welcoming words. We may even quote Campbell against his own theory; for he says, "If God provides the atonement, then forgiveness must precede atonement; and the atonement must be the form of the manifestation of the forgiving love of God, *not its cause*."

A second vital objection is that this theory is externally superposed on the facts and grotesquely out of harmony with them. Whatever moral and spiritual suffering we recognize in the Sufferer on the cross, we cannot by any stretch of imagination conceive that Christ was repenting of sins, or that His sufferings were those of a soul in the agony of contrition; nor is there any word in the record of the facts to verify such a conception. It is even less consonant with the historical facts than is the conception of the penal theory that Christ was bearing directly the wrath and curse of God upon sin.

With all this we recognize that the other aspects of the cross emphasized by Dr. Campbell are truly and admirably portrayed, and well in accord with Christian sentiment and experience. We have criticized simply that aspect which Campbell emphasizes as of central importance. Its underlying error, we believe, lies precisely in what he still holds in common with his opponents; namely, that God demands some satisfaction from humanity before He can remit sin and resume the outflow of His favour.

If we still insist on the conception of satisfaction, why not deduce it from the historical facts, and set aside the fiction of a legal requirement? Christ came into the world to save sinners; to proclaim forgiveness to a world which had almost ceased to believe in forgiveness and by His whole life of faith and obedience to lead men back to God. And what could more truly satisfy God's heart of holiness and love than to see men actually restored by Christ's Gospel and that saving work carried on in face of all the contradiction of the world, and persisted in even to death? What more is needed to explain the Divine word of satisfaction: "This is my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased"?

CHAPTER XII

THE DECLINE OF THE SATISFACTION THEORY

In the preceding exposition of satisfaction theories we have been surveying a scheme of thought which was specially prevalent in the seventeenth century, and was based on the dogmatic presuppositions that then dominated the mind of the Church. We may now return for a moment to consider the wonderful break-up of Scholastic Protestantism which took place in the eighteenth century, and which has been variously characterized as Rationalism, Deism, Moderatism, and Illuminism.

The seventeenth century made the Protestant creeds; the eighteenth century proceeded confidently to the unmaking of them. It is easy to discover some of the causes of this wonderful reversal of thought. One reason must be found in the narrow and self-sufficient dogmatism that pervaded the Church of the previous century. While the makers of the creed officially acknowledged that Churches might err and had erred, and that the supreme judge of truth was the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture, this modest disclaimer did not prevent the Churches from regarding as heretics and evil-doers those who did not conform to their confessional standards. Such an attitude of mind led to inevitable reaction in an age of growing tolerance. Further, while the Protestant scholasticism stood for the defence of important Christian truths, it cannot be said that it presented these in their full breadth of meaning. In this respect it compared unfavourably with the scholastic theology of the Middle Ages, which was at least conscious of the many-sidedness of truth, and endeavoured to do justice

to all points of view. The scheme of thought of the seventeenth century was coherent and logical simply because it ignored all but a few bare conceptions, and was thus blind to the most important principles of the Christian faith, and to the wealth of Christian experience.

The reaction that set in followed two courses, according as it was guided by the needs of faith itself, or by intellectual dissatisfaction. It showed itself both in a new evangelical piety, which turned away from the dry crusts, offered in the name of theology, to the deeper matters of heart-religion; and also in a broader theology, which ventured to distinguish between the essentials of faith and other points of doctrine which were only matters of individual opinion. In making this distinction, some, like the Deists of England, made a clean sweep of the specific Christian doctrines, and left little more than a rather commonplace and utilitarian morality as the essential content of religion. Within the Christian Church itself, many looked askance at the more metaphysical doctrines, and favoured a theology of common sense, in which the Deity of Christ or His Atonement were largely ignored, or passed by with a superficial acceptance, while earnest emphasis was laid on matters that directly concerned the moral and social life. Others rejected the earlier theory of Atonement—that of a vicarious punishment for the sins of the elect—as shocking to common-sense; they emphasized the universal goodness of God, and represented the death of Christ in Arminian fashion as impressing man with the gravity of sin, or as an example of God's judgment on sin, with a view to man's moral amendment.

With this prevailing indifference to specific doctrine, it was not to be expected that any considerable contribution of a positive kind should be made to theology. The general shallowness and ineffectuality of thought have often been remarked. Ritschl, however, places to the credit of the rationalists that they purified the conception of God and raised in new forms the question of the nature and value of punishment.[1] The concep-

[1] *Rechtfertigung*, I, 52–54.

tion of God as absolute Sovereign, who decrees the salvation of an elect number of His creatures, was set aside, and replaced by the view that He is a wise and loving Father, who seeks human happiness, whose justice is wisely-regulated love, and whose punishments are designed to lead man to amend his ways. Further, in discussions on the nature of punishment, it was discovered that the theory of penal atonement had largely overlooked the natural and temporal penalties of sin, presenting salvation simply as that which releases man from the punishment of eternal death. And among these natural and temporal penalties was the inner sense of guilt, which apparently could not be transferred from one person to another, and which could not be cancelled by any external punishment. What bearing had the Atonement of Christ on this sense of guilt? Some answered that this was removed by a special free act of God's grace; others, who held to the sufficiency of the penal theory, maintained that its removal was included in the forgiveness purchased by the cross; while, again, others held that it did not need to be removed. In any case its removal was not provided for in the terms of the legal punitive theory; for if my own punishment does not relieve me of the inner burden of guilt, how can I believe that any external vicarious punishment will remove it? When the question is once raised whether forgiveness is merely the removal of an external penalty, or something more personal, the need must soon be felt for a new theory of atonement, which will go more profoundly into the experience of sin. In fact, one may well ask whether the view of Christ's death as a scheme for our deliverance from the pains of hell shows any more insight into the real fact of redemption than the opposed view of common rationalism that Christ died for our moral amendment.

We may say, then, that the Illumination not only showed the inadequacy of the old dogmatic theory, but prepared the way for a new and positive construction of doctrine by revising some of its presuppositions. It has helped to obliterate the older conceptions of God as

absolute Arbitrary Power or abstract Justice, and constrained theologians to interpret the character of God by the best human analogies. Further, the notions of an external transference of sin, or of merit, or even of punishment, can never again fully satisfy the Christian mind. The worst punishment of sin is now recognized to be the inner alienation from God, and the burdensome sense of guilt, which are not affected by the mere remission of external penalties. Any new doctrine of Atonement must take account of the real evils of life, of which external penalty is but a sign or an outlying consequence. As McLeod Campbell says: "If we will come to the Atonement, not venturing in our darkness to predetermine anything as to its nature, but expecting light to shine upon our spirits from it, even the light of eternal life; if we will suffer it to inform us by its own light why we needed it, and what its true value to us is,—the punishment of sin will fall into its proper place as testifying to the existence of an evil greater than itself, even sin; from which greater evil it is the direct object of the Atonement to deliver us—deliverance from punishment being but a secondary result."[1]

Before concluding our consideration of these theories of Satisfaction, we may notice two remarkable modern attempts to rehabilitate the satisfaction idea in a new form. Though couched in modern language, they are not only reminiscent of the older theory, but are attempts to re-establish the main idea of it. We refer to the theories of the German Church historian, Adolf Harnack, and the Harvard philosopher, Josiah Royce.

Harnack is personally averse to any theory of satisfaction. In his criticism of the theories of Anselm and Abelard he expresses the most absolute repugnance to the thought of a Divinely-demanded satisfaction as a condition of salvation. But at the same time he charges both of these theologians with too lax conceptions of the righteousness of God, and with neglecting the important truth that on the cross the innocent suffered punishment

[1] Campbell, *Nature of the Atonement*, p. 164.

for the guilty, so that the sinner might fully realize the greatness of the sin that was forgiven him. Even Abelard, whose theory is more acceptable than Anselm's, "has not clearly recognized that Love is at its highest, and is alone effectual, when it takes the punishment on itself, and so reveals with the greatness of the forgiveness the greatness of the cancelled guilt. He has not recognized that the sinner cannot be freed from guilt unless he experience and see the punishment of the guilt."[1]

Harnack thus seems to oppose to the false doctrine of satisfaction the doctrine of a vicarious punishment. But one naturally asks: What is this vicarious punishment but a satisfaction to righteousness? If men are impressed by the greatness of their sin by viewing Christ's death as vicarious punishment, they must surely be also impressed with the thought that God's righteousness demands punishment, and that Christ's death has satisfied this demand vicariously, and so rendered their forgiveness possible and safe—which is the old doctrine of satisfaction in its Arminian form. Harnack seems to have become conscious of this consequence. He avoids it in a later essay by the frank acknowledgment that the whole scheme of thought is merely a subjective though ununavoidable presentation in the convert's mind. The sinner must think of God as a wrathful Judge, must think of Christ on the cross as suffering his punishment; for his salvation consists in turning away from his fear of the dreadful God to trust in One whose justice has been satisfied.

"God is Love. He has always been Love and will remain so. The consolation of the Gospel of Jesus consists indeed in this—that He has revealed unto us God as eternal Love. Far be the thought from us that God has been turned from wrath to love, and that something had to be paid or sacrificed in order that He might love and forgive. But with this acknowledgment the matter is not exhausted.

"For there is an inner law that compels the sinner to look upon God as a wrathful Judge. It is this conception of God which is the hardest and the most real punish-

[1] *Dogmengeschichte*, II, ch. vii, 4.

ment inflicted on sin. It tears the heart of man, transforms his thought of God into terror, robs him of peace, and delivers him to despair. This conception of God is a false one, and yet not false, for it is the necessary consequence of man's sin—that is to say, of his godlessness. How can this conception of God be overcome? Not by words, but by deeds. When the Holy One descends to sinners, when He lives with them and walks with them, when He does not count them as unworthy but calls them His brethren, when He serves them and dies for them—then their terror of the awful Judge dies away, and they believe that the Holy One is Love, and that Mercy is mightier still than Justice.

"It is in relation to these human conceptions that we have specially to regard the death of Christ. His death is thus the culminating point of the service which He rendered for sinners during His mission. This service had the single object of convincing sinners that forgiving Love is mightier than the Justice before which they tremble. If they believe this they are reconciled, and in this manner is the God of punitive Justice reconciled."[1]

One may well doubt whether the defenders of a Satisfaction theory will be grateful to the new protagonist who has entered the lists on their side. The vital objection to this presentation is that it fills the place of a true interpretation of the Atonement, and gives shelter to a theory which is based on admittedly wrong conceptions of God. It defends the erroneous presentation on the ground that it is natural and inevitable. It is truly amazing to find an historian of the Church assuming that the thought of God as an angry Judge and the penal view of Christ's death are universal and inevitable as a consequence of sin. It is forgotten that such conceptions have only prevailed in the Church when they were favoured by the prevailing teaching, and that in the early ages of the Church they were largely ignored both by the theologian and by the common man.

It may indeed be admitted that where such conceptions prevail the fears they produce may be removed by the

[1] *Atonement in Modern Religious Thought.*

cross; but surely the cross has far other significance and value. Christ's life and death not only remove the fear due to misunderstanding, but promote true understanding; they not only remove false fear, but inspire a true fear and reverence for God, such as is compatible with love and confidence. And, further, the cross takes away the false fear, not by accommodating itself to it, but by removing the ground of it—namely, the belief that God is ever to be conceived as an angry Judge who must punish. To remove the fear and leave the ground of fear standing, and thus to give consecration to the false conception of God by entrenching it in faith's view of the Atonement, is surely not the service rendered by Christ's cross; and it cannot be a service to theology so to depict it.

This may fairly be taken as the last refuge of a doctrine of penal satisfaction; for while it defends and partly incorporates the language of the doctrine, it acknowledges the inadequacy of the radical conceptions involved in it. In a similar way, the Anselmic theory of a deed of satisfaction which balances the evil done by man, has found a last expiring note in the theory which Professor Royce presents in the *Problem of Christianity.*

Royce considers the question of atonement from the standpoint of our concrete moral experience. He supposes the case of a man who has proved a traitor to his own ideal, disloyal to the cause he himself held to be the highest; and who has thus committed what he can recognize as his own last and unpardonable sin. What will be his attitude of mind, when on reflection he becomes fully conscious of his base betrayal? Such a man cannot take Matthew Arnold's advice and get rid of his sin by forgetting it; he can neither forget it nor get rid of it. That one irrevocable act has changed the face of his whole world. And the penalty of his sin is simply that the deed faces him, never to be annulled; that he feels a guilt as enduring as time, and cannot forgive himself. He may not concern himself as to God's forgiveness; it is his own inward peace that is at stake; the "hell of the irrevocable" constitutes his true endless punishment.

The moving finger writes, and having writ
Moves on ; not all your piety nor wit
  Can lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

The question now is whether salvation is possible in view of such a sin. Certainly he can make no atonement for himself. Whatever later opportunities of loyalty he may seize, he will be no less guilty than before. Nor can he be affected by any alleged fact of penal satisfaction ; for why should penalty reconcile him to his past sin ? Nor, again, will any " moral theory " of atonement avail to bring the needed reconciliation. For though he repent, that is, condemn his sin and turn to better deeds, his traitorous act will ever stand before him ; and no repentance nor amendment, nor even the forgiveness and renewed love of the community he once betrayed, can bring back the unscarred love and confidence of former days. No assurance of forgiveness whether of God or man can wash out the record of fact. What, then, can atone ?

The evil deed cannot be undone ; but Royce holds that something may be done to set it in a new and more gracious light. For lost causes have often proved the opportunity for greater triumphs of loyalty and devotion. Suppose the evil deed is retrieved by a new deed arising from it, which not only triumphs over the treason, but actually makes the world better because of it ; would not such a recreative work make forgiveness possible, and be a real atonement ? Suppose this deed is such, that " when you look down upon the human world after the new creative deed has been done in it, you say, first, 'This deed was made possible by that treason,' and secondly, '*The world as transformed by this creative deed is better than it would have been had all else remained the same, but had that treason not been done*' " ; is not the treason thus atoned for, so that the repentant traitor may now forgive himself ? In the Bible story of Joseph and his brethren, what was it that enabled these brethren finally to forgive themselves for their dastardly deed, their treason against the family ? What

but the fact that, in the long train of events which, starting from their treason, led to Joseph's rise to power and the reunion of the family in Egypt, a greater good had been created out of the evil itself? May not this, then, be the truth that underlies the Christian doctrine of Atonement, and has been expressed in Christian feeling, worship and art? These "have been full of the sense that *somehow* (and *how* has remained indeed a mystery) there was something so precious about the work of Christ, something so divinely wise (so skilful and divinely beautiful!) about the plan of salvation,—that as a result of all this, after Christ's work was done, the world as a whole was a nobler and richer and worthier creation than it would have been if Adam had not sinned."[1]

This view of vicarious satisfaction is not applied with any special detail to the death of Christ; but it is expressly opposed to the ordinary "penal" and "moral" theories, and is understood by Royce to exhibit the substratum of truth in the doctrine of Christ's work of satisfaction.

Here we may consider, first, the value of the theory as applied to Christ's sacrifice, and then Royce's interpretation of our moral experience.

So far as Royce has applied his view to the Christian Atonement, it is only too obvious that it does not fill the place of a precise theory at all, but rather presupposes atonement. That through Christ's death there has resulted a better and nobler world than if sin had not entered at all, seeing that it has brought a higher worth and nobility to human life, no one need deny. That out of evil good has come, and that even the sin of man has been turned in mysterious ways to the evolution of higher good, is in itself a comforting and inspiring thought, and may be applied to all the suffering and sin of the world. But a theory of Atonement is usually intended to explain how the good has arisen out of the evil in Christ's death, and how men have been led through it into the worthier and nobler life which has issued from it. If, as Royce says, the "how" remains a mystery, it is hopeless to

[1] Royce, *Problem of Christianity*, Book I, Lecture 6.

search for a theory at all, and the special and transcendent value of Christ's death remains unexplained. That Christ's death has such a transcendent value, and is fraught with higher blessings to man, presupposes that the cross has somehow put an end to the alienation between man and God; but this "how" is not illumined for us by an historical reflection that merely puts in a striking way the facts to be explained.

But, apart from this ineptness in the application, there is a fatal error in Royce's account of what is necessary to the experience of forgiveness. The problem here is, how the burden of guilt, created by the man's own condemnation of himself, is to be removed. Neither punishment nor penitence, he teaches, can here avail; for the sin cannot be undone, and neither punishment nor penitence can blot it out of his life. What atonement, then, is possible? Anselm, the theologian, had replied: the burden can be taken away if one is found to do a deed in man's name whose merit more than balances the sin—and so he developed the doctrine of a single meritorious "deed of satisfaction" rendered on the cross. The modern philosopher, Royce, adapts, perhaps unconsciously, the idea of Anselm, putting it in a more general form. The burden of sin will remain, he says, and forgiveness will be impossible, until some one arrest the evil consequences, turn them to issues of blessing, and so use the very sin itself for the greater triumph of good. When this takes place, a true satisfaction is made, and the sinner can feel truly forgiven.

We have here a satisfaction theory reduced to psychological terms. We cannot find forgiveness and release from guilt till such satisfaction is made as will link up our evil deed with moral progress, and reveal it as an instrument of greater good. But, we may ask, will even this kind of satisfaction truly atone for our sin? We may here leave out of account the light-hearted sinner, who may be well satisfied to discover that his evil deed did not result in the evil consequences that might have been feared. Such a man may indeed more easily forgive himself, and may be even tempted to look favour-

ably on a sin which had such strikingly good consequences. In that case, however, he is reconciled *with his sin*, rather than with his own better self! But take the earnest man supposed in Royce's example, who feels the burden of his sin, and whose conscience is not satisfied with confession or punishment. Will it really satisfy such a man's better nature to see another, or others, struggling and suffering because of the sin committed, and wrenching at last a higher triumph for goodness in the community? Can he take any unction to his soul in seeing others turning his disloyal act to good account? Will he not feel himself a traitor still, though the traitorous deed has been so far annulled in its consequences by the loyalty and toil of others?

We must return from this shadowy satisfaction theory to a more adequate psychological analysis. Let us ask again, how shall a man find reconciliation with his own conscience, the God within him, and rise from the "hell of the irrevocable"? It seems clear that no personal or vicarious punishment can release him from the burden of his guilt; for punishment cannot alter the fact, and the better self must continue to condemn the self that committed the evil deed. Can the solution be found in the new aspect given to the evil deed by its becoming a means to greater good? Such a view could only produce complacency, if not reconcilement with sin itself—which would be a lowering of the moral manhood. How, then, is he to find reconciliation and peace? The only possible answer is that he must repudiate his sin and put it out of his life by identifying himself with his own better manhood. That is what we mean by repentance when we give the term its due significance. Repentance is not merely, as Royce thinks, the condemnation of the evil we have done and the desire to amend one's ways. It is possible for a man to condemn his evil deeds, and yet, when temptation recurs, to repeat them; it is possible to condemn one's sin, and do it while condemning it. It is also possible to amend one's ways without any true *Metanoia*, or complete change of attitude and heart. True repentance is to be distinguished from remorse.

Remorse is the name we give to the state of mind in which the sinner, still living on the old plane of thought and desire, condemns his past sin for its folly and the evil consequences attached to it, and now seeks to amend his ways, that is, to act more prudently in future and to do what the law or conscience requires. But repentance is the state of mind of one who repudiates his past sin; who has risen to the plane of life where such conduct is alien and undesirable; who is become one with his own better ideal. In the first case, the sinner still remains on the natural plane, is one with that lower self whose act he condemns, and hence he cannot feel his sin forgiven; in the other case, the sinner has really repented of his sin, has become one with his own better self, and thus arrives at that inward harmony in which the burden of guilt is assuaged, and forgiveness is realized. It is true that even such a repentance cannot turn back the flow of time, for the acts of the past are irrevocable; but in a sense they are no longer his acts, for he is another man, who has "died to sin and is alive to holiness." And if he still stands as chargeable with them in the eyes of a fallible world, and if he still bears the consequences of his past actions, he can win at least the assurance that, forgiving himself, he is also forgiven of God. For repentance of this kind is inseparable from forgiveness.

While that is true, the problem of forgiveness as a realized fact in life has not yet been solved; and we have still to consider how real repentance becomes possible. How can a man be born again? Can he lift himself into the higher plane of spiritual being? And passing this, we have to face the further question: does not a perfect repentance suppose a relatively perfect being? We talk readily of a man identifying himself with his own better ideal or better self, of yielding himself to the will of God, of whole-hearted surrender to the Holy Spirit; but in all soberness of speech, is such complete identification or surrender ever realized? These are some of the problems that meet us in modern theories of Atonement; and to these we now pass.

CHAPTER XIII

MODERN VIEWS OF ATONEMENT

(A) Hegel and Schleiermacher

The nineteenth century is marked by a many-sidedness of thought which seems at first sight to defy all definite characterization. In Theology the Biblical traditional method of the former period gave place to wider methods of thinking, in which the speculative mind sought freer expression, and the practical mind opened up new problems and sought to solve them by following the path of Christian experience. This expansion of thought is reflected in the manifold variety of view as to the work and atonement of Christ.

Without attempting any complete survey, we shall here limit ourselves to what will serve our purpose; and shall deal in three chapters, first, with the revival of thought in Hegel and Schleiermacher; secondly, with the Ritschlian school; and thirdly, with some currents of English theology.

Modern theology has been governed by two tendencies of thought; the one based on idealistic speculation, the other on the facts of religious experience. The one was represented in the beginning of last century by Hegel, the master-mind of philosophy, the other by Schleiermacher; and the stream of thought emanating from these two thinkers has fructified theology ever since. Both of these thinkers were far removed from the easy-going rationalism of the previous century; and both sought to do justice to the Christian doctrines. The one dealt preferably with the metaphysical aspect of the doctrines,

seeking to justify them by giving them a wider setting; the other sought to bring out the practical value of the doctrines for faith, and to test them in the light of the Christian consciousness.

It is not necessary here to attempt any survey of Hegel's philosophy as a whole, or to deal with the idea of God as Absolute Spirit in which his philosophy culminates. Suffice it to say that Hegel was convinced that Christianity was the absolute and final religion, and that its doctrines in general were truths of reason as well as of faith. The only difference, so far as thought was concerned, between the truth of faith and that of philosophy, was that faith presented its object in a pictorial and symbolic fashion, while the task of philosophy was to place ideas in their universal setting and give them their complete and final notional form.

In his *Philosophy of Religion* Hegel presents his view of the Atonement, or the reconciliation of man to God necessitated by the discord in man's nature. Human nature is good in itself, and manifests the harmony of innocence, but in its growth it passes into a state of discord. This discord is accompanied by a sense of guilt, which is increased when brought into relation with God as pure Spirit. Man is thus universally a sinner, but a sinner who longs for reconciliation with God and with himself. The removal of the discord seems an impossibility; how indeed can a man who is finite and sinful transcend himself? How can the particular self attain to the universal standpoint of his ideal?

But the discord can be overcome; and both philosophy and Christianity teach the reality of reconciliation. Philosophy teaches generally that the oppositions which we are apt to regard as permanent and fixed are not absolute in reality, but only partial and temporary, are indeed the preparation for a higher harmony and unity. The actual and the ideal, man and God, are not absolutely exclusive; from the highest point of view they are one, identical; and the Atonement is found in the realization of this fundamental identity.

The same truth is taught by Christianity, in the doctrine

of Christ and His work of Atonement. Jesus Christ is both man and God. From the ordinary standpoint He is an ordinary man, a teacher and martyr and nothing more. But from the standpoint of faith, which sees more deeply into truth, He is one in whom the Divine has become flesh, God and man in one; and by communion with Him, unity with God and true Atonement are realized.

Above all, faith regards His death in a higher and truer light as the very revelation of God. It looks at that death not merely in its natural and moral significance as a natural death brought about by hate and violence, but as a revelation of God in His complete unity with human finitude. "His death is, so to speak, the touchstone by which faith proves itself; for here essentially it shows its understanding of Christ's appearing in the flesh. And His death has this meaning that Christ was the God-man, God who also had human nature, and that even unto death. Death is the common lot of human finitude; it is thus the highest proof of humanity, of complete finitude. And, indeed, Christ died on the cross the aggravated death of a malefactor; not merely a natural death but one of ignominy and shame; His humanity thus manifested itself to the uttermost." But further, faith sees Christ rising from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God; that is, it sees Him through death conquering death and all finitude.

The cross thus signifies that Infinite Love has assumed our finitude in order to conquer it in all its forms. When man judges himself as a sinner, alienated from God, he takes the ordinary moral view of himself as an isolated personality, and individually responsible. This view has its truth in the finite realm; but in the higher realm of the spirit it becomes abstract and false. For in the true spiritual sense, Christ's death is the death of all finitude and evil. It is thus the central point of Atonement. There evil and finitude are potentially abolished; they are perceived in their nothingness, as what they ultimately are.

And those who enter by faith into Christ's community

are no longer dominated and depressed by the natural finite life. God has come into humanity, and reconciled himself with man; or rather, God has revealed Himself to be eternally reconciled with the world. The oneness of the finite and the infinite, of man and God,—this is the eternal truth revealed on the cross in historical form; and the various pictorial conceptions of the Church's doctrine find their truth in this essential idea.

The Atonement thus presented in Christ is realized in the Christian Church, and symbolized in its rites and sacraments. The individual, however, is not a mere passive recipient of this grace. He must be conformed to the likeness of Christ's death, by dying to his natural self and to selfishness. He must "die to live"; he must give up the particular and isolated life; and merge himself in the universal life, which is the life of God.[1]

Hegel boldly announces that his doctrine, here as elsewhere, reconciles reason with faith. It is somewhat disconcerting, however, to find Hegel speaking with three voices: now as a rationalist of the naturalist type, who sees no finality in Christ's teaching, and looks on Christ historically as a teacher and a martyr; now as a believing Christian, whose faith pictures Christ as conquering death and finitude and so bridging the gulf between God and man; and finally as a philosopher, who denies that any gulf exists and that God and man are eternally one. One cannot be surprised that Hegel's followers divided themselves immediately into a Right School and a Left, and that some even fell back into materialistic rationalism!

It is true, however, that Hegel meant to hold fast to his Lutheran faith in Jesus as the God-man who has brought the Divine life to men. The older rationalist view is not absolutely rejected, but it presents only the superficial view of the matter. Hegel throws the shield of his philosophy round the deeper faith-view of Christ's work, as presenting the essential truth. The only question is, whether his philosophy, in giving a new form to the conception of faith, has not transformed its intrinsic nature.

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, Part III, section ii, "The Kingdom of the Son."

His presentation of the Christian faith is evidently more in accordance with the Greek-Christian standpoint of the early Church than with the precise doctrines of the later centuries. He evidently believes that faith has found its best expression in early Christian thought.[1] For faith sees Jesus as the God-man, who comes into our human life, identifies Himself in the fullest way with finite human nature, accepting all its conditions even to the experience of death and shame. He thus breaks down at every point the gulf that separates the finite spirit from the Infinite ; through death conquering death, pouring the wealth of His Divine immortal life into our finite humanity, and so abolishing its finitude and evil. Death and evil are now abolished, potentially nullified ; and those who share in the fellowship of Christ's life and sufferings enter actually into the Infinite Divine life.

We have already endeavoured to give some appreciation of this essentially Greek-Christian interpretation of the redemption. It starts from the right point of view—that the obstacles to be overcome by the redemptive forces do not lie in God but in the discords of human life ; and it states the profound truth that those who share in the Divine life of Christ are lifted into a higher spiritual realm and look with a new vision on evil and death. But when Hegel speaks *qua* philosopher, and seeks to give the faith-doctrine a more rational form, he proceeds to distinguish between the temporal form and the timeless truth. For him the faith-form is abstract in that it presents the redemption merely in an external historical way, and so does not attain to the final philosophical notion. The essential truth is that God and man are eternally reconciled, that finite and Infinite are radically one ; and that we have only to realize this unity to be lifted into the sphere where the fear of alienation passes away ; where forgiveness of sin is a matter

[1] While Hegel takes a comprehensive and tolerant view of other ways of expressing the faith, he quite expressly repudiates the conception of satisfaction, so far as it implies that " God is a tyrant who demands sacrifice."

of course, and where change, finitude and death appear in their nothingness.

One may question whether this timeless philosophical abstraction, which evacuates the work of Christ of its unique and concrete historical value, is any improvement on the abstract Greek-Christian statement of the faith. For those who live in time the historical time-values will always continue to have a meaning, and the philosophy which discards them will soon itself be discarded. As the more recent philosophy rightly points out, life is more than thought, and history more than an evolution of ideas. And the discord in human life, which forms the problem of redemption, is not to be solved by a philosophy which overlooks the spiritual dynamic forces of personality and history, and trusts to reach some standpoint of "eternal truth" from which the discord is seen to be illusory. The Christian faith cannot be reconciled with philosophy on these terms.

Hegel's position may be taken as sufficiently representative of the transformations which the idea of atonement has received at the hands of speculative philosophy. The speculative school devoted itself mainly to questions of the theory of knowledge, or to cosmical problems; and when it dealt with questions of the spiritual life it seldom touched upon the concrete problem. A philosophy like that of Schelling, for example, which starts from the idea of an eternal incarnation, and reduces the idea of reconciliation to the return of the finite to the infinite, scarcely comes in sight of the moral problem of Atonement. In more recent times, the idealist is content to teach that salvation consists in rising from our self-centred and isolated life to the profounder consciousness of union with God, and to the fuller, universal life of the Spirit; and E. Caird, in interpreting Hegel's view on religion, lays emphasis[1] on the truth that "dying to live" is the secret of true religious life. But with this the problem of redemption is not answered, but only presented for solution. We have still to inquire, both as men and as philosophers, how this "dying to live" is

[1] Cf. "Hegel" in *Philosophical Classics*, pp. 211–215.

to be practically realized. The very problem of atonement is how men who are hampered not merely by their finitude but by their sin, are to die to themselves and rise to conscious union with God and the blessedness of the universal life. It is no adequate answer to say that Christ revealed, or realized, this oneness with God; nor even to say that Christ, by entering all our human experiences and death itself, has invested all human life with Divine significance. For, admitting all that philosophy can say of man's potential oneness with God, does not the real question remain, how this potential Divine in man is to be concretely actualized in fact and experience?

We turn now to consider the contrasted method of thought adopted by Hegel's contemporary, SCHLEIERMACHER, who in his *Christian Faith* led the way to a concrete historical and ethical interpretation of Christian doctrine. Schleiermacher was a philosopher and a churchman as well as a Christian believer; but his distinctive method is seen in the supreme value he sets on the pronouncements of the Christian conscience and Christian experience. The more speculative aspects of faith fall largely into the background; and his reverence for the creeds does not prevent him from submitting them to criticism and revision. It is evident, however, that the Church's creed exerts a considerable pressure on his thought. The churchman and the private man are by no means at one; and while Schleiermacher does his best to prove his substantial harmony with the substance of the Church doctrines, one cannot fail to perceive that he is often hampered by phraseology that has become alien to his own thought. It is almost painful to notice how he struggles with such formulated doctrines as those of original sin, active and passive obedience, satisfaction, imputed righteousness and the like, and strains to give them a meaning in harmony with his Christian consciousness. This "too complaisant accommodation to tradition," as Ritschl terms it,[1] gravely hinders the unity of

[1] *Rechtfertigung*, III, 42.

his exposition, and makes it more difficult to find the proper perspective for his own doctrine.

The problem of redemption arises from the fact of universal sin. Sin, according to Schleiermacher, has developed with the growth of the spiritual life, which finds itself hampered and opposed by the natural life. The natural life, the life of the flesh, has had the advantage of being first in the field; for "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." And the natural life, seeking without reflection its own manifold particular ends, resists the growing spiritual ideal and thus becomes sin. Further, to make room for the doctrine of original sin, Schleiermacher points out that sin has a social as well as an individual aspect. The individual is only a unit of a larger whole; and personal sin develops on the basis of the sin of the race. Actual sin has its roots in original sin, the sin of common humanity; and the weight of both is such that the individual is helpless in sin. Man possesses, indeed, what older theologians called a "civil justice," and is not absolutely depraved; some good must remain in him if redemption is to be possible. Yet his sin is in some sense "infinite," seeing it is absolutely opposed to good, and seeing, too, that it has almost invincible power over mankind. Schleiermacher deals gently even with the older doctrine that each individual is responsible for the sin of the race, conceding its truth in so far as individual sin is not separable from the sin of the race, but has its roots there. Possibly there is some unconscious sophistry here; for in truth Schleiermacher recognizes only the individual's own sin and sinfulness as imputable to him; and the "infinity" of sin which had a meaning in Anselm's doctrine—as determining the measure of the satisfaction to be rendered to God's honour—has no further consequence in Schleiermacher's theology. His interpretation of the older doctrine simply amounts to this, that sin is supremely evil, and has commanding power over both the individual and society.

Sin is followed by punishment. This evil follows naturally, in accordance with the order of nature, which is also God's order and evinces His righteous dealing with

sin. Such evil, however, is not to be viewed as satisfying a mere retributive justice; for such a conception reduces God to the level of an earthly judge, whose punishments are a modification of private revenge and still partake of that character. Nor are punishments ordained, properly speaking, with a view to moral improvement; for they do not really improve character, otherwise God might have substituted a system of punishments for the redemptive work of Christ. They are properly regarded as having deterrent value; making the way of transgressors hard, and so preparing the way for future salvation.

On these premises Schleiermacher proceeds to the restatement of the doctrine of redemption, threading his way through the old-fashioned terminology to a view of his own. In his criticism of the older doctrine, he sifts out the wheat from the chaff. Thus, dealing with the phrase "vicarious satisfaction," he can find a valuable meaning in the terms if taken separately. Christ's sufferings were doubtless vicarious or substitutionary in the sense that His sufferings were the consequence, not of His own sin, but of the sin of others. Whenever anyone suffers evil which has no connection with his own sin, he may be said to suffer punishment for others, and in so far as his suffering exhausts the consequence of sin, he may be said to suffer directly instead of others. Christ's suffering and death were also a satisfaction; for was not all Christ's work for the world's redemption and His obedience even unto death a real satisfaction to God? But Schleiermacher refuses to conjoin the terms and speak of a vicarious satisfaction; for the vicarious suffering was no satisfaction, and the satisfaction rendered to God in Christ's obedience was not vicarious. In a similar way Schleiermacher deals with the idea of the "imputed righteousness" of Christ, which he rejects in its forensic sense as implying an external and mechanical interchange, but translates into the more ethical thought that God looks on believers in the light of their union with Christ and forgives their sin as seeing the Christ in them by virtue of their faith.

But we discover Schleiermacher's own view of redemp-

tion from more unhampered expressions. What man essentially needs is to be delivered from the power that keeps him on the lower level of the natural life, and to be raised to the blessedness of the spiritual life in union with God. This need is provided for by Christ, whose perfectly unclouded "God-consciousness" constituted the very being of God in Him, and made Him God's power unto salvation. The work of Christ, in life and death, is to communicate to believers His own God-consciousness, and so to lift them into union with God and blessedness. This regeneration or communication of Divine life may well be characterized as mystical; it is certainly a mystery to those who have no experience of it. It is not to be understood as a merely empirical influence, wrought by teaching and example; for that would produce only a gradual betterment, and no real redemption from sin. On the other hand, it is no magical communication of life, but is naturally mediated by Christ Himself and passes on through the Christian community to individual believers. This communication of Divine life shows itself in two aspects: both as a Redeeming power, converting the soul from sin, and as a Reconciling power, bringing forgiveness. On the one hand, the believer who assimilates this new Divine consciousness, has a quickened sense of sin and the evil of it, and receives power to conquer it—that is, he is converted by way of faith and repentance. On the other hand, he is also justified, experiencing the forgiveness of sins and the assurance of his adoption into God's family. The forgiveness of sins does not mean the removal of the evils which are the natural consequence of sin; but it implies the removal of their significance as punishment; in other words, it is the removal of the sense of guilt. And again, Schleiermacher contends that this communication of forgiveness has its mystical side. It is assuredly more than the empirical result of a gradual moral improvement, otherwise forgiveness would be reduced to a distant hope. But neither is it a magical result based on an external satisfaction—a view which, as wrought out in the theory of vicarious satisfaction, does not explain the removal of guilt, but only the

removal of punishment; but rather, it is a result wrought out in experience through the inner assimilation of Christ's spirit.[1]

This exposition of the redeeming and reconciling value of the new God-consciousness implanted by Christ needs only to be supplemented by some indication of the value of Christ's death. That death on Calvary represents the crowning "moment" of Christ's redemptive work. We are not to think that Jesus went to Jerusalem in order to suffer death; He went up because His work among the Jews called Him, in spite of the fact that He foresaw His death. His sufferings and death were thus, historically considered, the natural issue of His mission; but their burden was increased in His case in that He, the Sinless One, entered fully into sympathy with sinful and guilty humanity. By His death He exhibited the steadfastness of His God-consciousness over against sin, and all the evil that sin could bring against Him. He manifested there also the power of His unconquered blessedness in the midst of unexampled suffering; a suffering brought on Him by sin, and heightened by His sympathetic mind towards sinners. In this sense Christ may be said to have borne the punishment of sin, and to have borne it away; for believers find their guilt borne away, and no longer regard the evils that remain in the light of punishment.[2]

Three factors have contributed to the construction of Schleiermacher's doctrine: his earnest Christian consciousness, the standing Church doctrine of which his Dogmatic professes to be an exposition, and his own philosophy, which culminates in a somewhat Spinozistic conception of God. As already said, he was considerably hampered in the expression of his own Christian consciousness by the prevailing creed; and one may admire

[1] The scheme of Schleiermacher's thought may be conveniently summarized as follows: The all-inclusive term is Regeneration or the New Birth, which includes (*a*) Conversion, proceeding by Repentance and Faith, and (*b*) Justification, which includes Forgiveness and Adoption. The first is the correlative of Redemption (Erlösung), the second of Reconciliation or Atonement (Versöhnung).

[2] *Der christliche Glaube*, sections 100, 101 and 104.

the adroitness with which he has managed to guide himself through the maze of Church formulas. But his philosophy and his Christian consciousness have also been hard to reconcile. His abstract conception of God as the all-inclusive Being, and of religion as the pervading consciousness of all finite and temporal things as being in and through the Infinite and Eternal, have inevitably influenced his theology; and one can see this influence to some extent in his doctrine of redemption. The principle of redemption lies in the God-consciousness which Christ possessed and which He mediates to us. But if this God-consciousness simply means what Schleiermacher *qua* philosopher appears to mean by it—the merging of the finite consciousness into the infinite consciousness—it is not at all clear how any real repentance or any experience of forgiveness can be produced by it. The fact is, however, that Schleiermacher's Christian experience and vision of Christ come here to the help of his rather "thin" metaphysic, and serve to vivify the philosophical abstraction. He is thus able to picture redemption as the communication of a full Divine life, which acts in us as a redeeming force. It redeems us from sin and selfishness, giving us new ideals of service and power to realize them. It brings home to us the forgiveness of sins; not merely lifting us to a level where nothing finite is of consequence, but giving us new knowledge of the forgiving God. And the death of Christ is the crowning manifestation of His work, not simply because He shows there the steadfastness of His union with the Infinite Being, and His untroubled blessedness in that union, but because we see Him there bearing on His heart the sin of the world through His sympathy with sinful men. In short, it is just when Schleiermacher forgets for the moment the entanglements of the creeds and his more abstract metaphysical conceptions, and allows his Christian consciousness free play, that he opens the path to new and fruitful thought.

The followers of Schleiermacher—who formed what has been called the Mediating School of theology—were

united rather in the general attitude of compromise, and their desire to commend the older theology to the modern mind by smoothing out its harsher outlines, than by any definite advance along the new lines suggested by Schleiermacher. To a large extent, however, they freed themselves from the more abstract conception of God which lay at the background of Schleiermacher's thought. God was conceived not merely as the Infinite Being, but as the holy and loving Infinite Personality, whose holy love is the source and centre of the historical redemption. The God-consciousness of Schleiermacher was understood not merely as the sense of the Eternal, or blissful rest in the infinitude of the universe, but as the full Divine life of love and service to humanity. The transmission of this Divine life in Christ was more dynamically conceived; and the work of Christ on the cross was regarded not only as the demonstration of an untroubled blessedness and a steadfast God-consciousness, but as the energizing and agonizing of a holy and sympathizing love. Discussions also arose as to the nature of forgiveness and its relation to conversion; the question was much disputed whether forgiveness preceded conversion, or followed it, and whether forgiveness was immediately or gradually secured by the believer. Some attempted to relate forgiveness to the death of Christ by conceiving the latter as a pledge or security for the believer's sanctification and thus warranting the Divine forgiveness; while others conceived Christ's sufferings as a sacrifice and an Atonement, not in the sense of a vicarious punishment, but in the sense of an offering well-pleasing to God and so mediating His forgiveness. In such cases there was a return to a somewhat vague satisfaction-theory. Thus Nitzsch supplements the Abelardian conception of Christ's work by speaking of Christ as representative of man and making atonement (Versöhnung); but in carrying out his exposition he falls back on the thought that the death of Christ awakens penitence in which sin is judged, forgiven, and removed.[1] It must be said that many of these mediating theologians have

[1] *System der christlichen Lehre*, sections 135, 136.

fallen heir to Schleiermacher's weakness rather than to his strength; straining their theory in the effort to accommodate themselves to older formulas instead of frankly re-interpreting or revising them.

A notable exception to this rule was the Swiss theologian, ALEXANDER SCHWEIZER, who has been called the most genuine and the most brilliant follower of Schleiermacher.[1] His theology is based on the general thought that Christ is the mediator of the highest type of religious life, because He Himself fully realized the ideal of religion. He is the word of God, the revelation of the Divine life in humanity, and the ideal of human life. His work was the in-bringing of the religion of redemption, the lifting of men to the Divine life of love, service and blessedness.

Following Schleiermacher's traditional division of the work of Christ into His prophetic, His priestly, and His kingly ministry, Schweizer gets to the heart of the subject in his exposition of Christ's high-priestly office. After pointing out the inconsistencies and the sophistry of the old Satisfaction theory, he proceeds to consider what remains of substantial truth in that theory. The obedience which Christ rendered was no slavish obedience to the law, or a matter of legal religion; it was a filial obedience rendered to the Father to the end of our redemption. The distinction between "active" and "passive" obedience is set aside as serving no purpose, and as obscuring the obvious fact that Christ's suffering has no value of its own when distinguished from His voluntary submission to it, that is, from His active obedience. The priestly or mediating work of Christ must lie in His perfect filial obedience, appearing as love and holiness and sympathy with men, entitling Him to intercede for us, and also rendering our prayers in His name well-pleasing to God. In this sense Christ's perfection covers our imperfection; and His righteousness may be said to be "imputed" to others, seeing that the ideal perfected in Him warrants the prospect of a similar perfection in His followers. But it is sheer misunderstanding to take this as meaning that Christ's righteous-

[1] Schwarz: *Neueste Theologie*, p. 501.

ness stands in our stead, or that Christ's obedience satisfied the Divine will of righteousness, so that we have no further call to righteousness or obedience. Such perversion of a profound truth only illustrates "how the devil can build his chapel beside the sanctuary."

Passing from this special aspect, he considers the work of Christ as the historical revelation of God's redeeming grace. He notes how the conception of God has advanced from that of natural Power and Omniscience to that of moral Sovereignty, and finally to that of the Fatherly Love, which includes all other attributes. God's grace is not to be conceived as opposed to righteousness; true love is of course holy and righteous love. The love of God is never indifferent to the sin of His children, but must busy itself with the removal of it and of all the evil it has brought in its train. "It is this rescuing love of God which shows itself in Christ and Christianity, in order to bring sinful man, who stands condemned in his legal religion, to the saving, true and intimate relation to God, such as Christ realized in Himself and offers to all. Here is found redemption from the dominion of sin, because the law which was formerly an external thing, now enters as a living spirit into the heart; and here is found reconciliation, because, in turning from the fatal works of the law, the fatherly grace of God is received." The only atonement which satisfies God is that in which the sinner turns to God in humility, recognizes God's right to punish, and trusts solely to God's grace, and the redeeming love revealed in Christ. This inward, personal atonement takes the place of the vicarious satisfaction of legalism. "It is due to the externalizing of religion into mere legality that an external satisfaction is viewed as more important than that which takes place in ourselves; that substitution and payment by another are regarded as more efficacious than the individual's own atonement; and that an equivalent merit, consisting in supererogatory service, is taken as more pleasing to God than personal contrition." [1]

What is then the special significance of Christ's obedi-

[1] *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, section 132, par. 3.

ence unto death? What, but that it is most fitted to produce the penitence and faith in which forgiveness is realized, and to awaken a filial trust in the God of love? Schweizer here enlarges the Abelardian conception in the following thesis: "Christ's suffering even to death on the cross is effective, not only as *the highest proof of His saving love* and of faithfulness to His calling, which draws us away from evil, and awakens a grateful responsive love; and not only as *the perfected moral sacrifice* of utter devotion to God and His will; but also as achieving *the decisive liberation of the religion of Christianity from the legal religion of Judaism.*"[1] Dealing with the second point—Christ's death as a moral sacrifice—he inveighs strongly against the use that has been made of the Old Testament sacrifice in the interpretation of Christ's death. These sacrifices were part of a legal religion, and while they were naturally applied by the New Testament writers by way of analogy, they belong to a type of religion that is transcended by Christianity. Paul often uses the sacrificial conception, but he applies it oftener to himself and to Christians generally than to Christ.[2] The sacrifice of Christ was no merely enhanced and completed legal sacrifice, but one which makes all other kinds of sacrifice valueless; namely, the sacrifice of self-denying devotion to the service of God. As such it is not vicarious at all, but rather calls all believers to continue such offerings to God, whether in doing or in suffering. "The moral idea of sacrifice has with Paul entirely subverted every levitical, ceremonial, antique idea of sacrifice, as having magical or metaphysical power; and nothing could be more anti-Pauline than the modern effort to trace religious mysteries in the sacrificial worship so as to reach the hidden secret of Christ's atoning sacrifice. The spirit of Paul was by no means set on seeking the key to the understanding of Christ's death in the superstitious 'rudiments' of the world."[3]

There remains the third important aspect of Christ's

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, section 133.
[2] E.g. Rom. xii. 15, 16; Phil. ii. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 6; Col. i. 24.
[3] *Glaubenslehre*, section 133.

death, which Schweizer emphasizes as being the fundamental view of Paul; namely, that Christ's death was the decisive factor in the liberation of Christianity from the legal religion of Judaism. "The doctrine of Paul as to the death of Christ is set forth with great impressiveness in his chief epistles, and consists of the thesis that with the introduction in Christ, at the Divinely appointed time, of the Redemptive Religion, the Gospel and Justification by Faith, the former religion of law, with its legal worship and justification by works or legal obedience, has been abrogated by God Himself as being now obsolete, so that it is a sin to continue to seek salvation in it, whether in whole or in part; and further, that the complete liberation of Christianity from Judaism was in point of fact historically decided for all Christ's followers by His rejection and His submission to the curse of the cross, so that we owe especially to this death the full possession of the free Gospel with all its saving grace."[1] Schweizer does not mean that the death of Christ was absolutely necessary to achieve this end, or indeed to accomplish any redemptive end; Christ would still have created His new religion and brought salvation, even if Jerusalem had been converted, instead of crucifying Him. But he maintains that, without this rejection by Judaism, Christianity would have had the greatest difficulty in separating itself from the religion of legality. In this light we can more clearly understand what Paul means when he says that Christ became a curse for us (a curse not of God, but of the law); that He was made sin for us (in the eyes of the Jewish law), that we might become God's righteousness; that He was set forth as a propitiation, the token that God was bringing in the righteousness of faith and forgiving the sin of the past; and that He died the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. "So the great mystery is explained which lies in the public crucifixion of Christ as a malefactor; the offence of the cross reveals itself as the highest love and wisdom; the apparent curse a well-spring of blessing, the defeat as victory; the stone

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, section 133, par. 2.

rejected by the builders is become the corner-stone of the building of redemptive religion ; the death of the cross the most glorious act of love, in the light of which appears a new humanity unhampered by Jewish or national limitations."[1]

If Schweizer belongs to the mediating school of theology, he has certainly advanced beyond many others of his school, who were, as he himself laments, "playing with dogmatic antiquities." Possibly he is inclined to make too much of the historical evaluation of Christ's death as the death of legal religion, and is thus prevented from following out more thoroughly the theory of Abelard which he regards as of central value. But he has certainly deepened and enriched the theory of Schleiermacher, of whose method he was a worthy representative.

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, section 133, par. 3.

CHAPTER XIV

MODERN VIEWS OF ATONEMENT

(B) The Ritschlian Theory

Albrecht Ritschl has been regarded as the greatest theological mind in Germany since the time of Schleiermacher, and his work on *Justification and Reconciliation* as marking a new epoch in theology. While loyal to the principle of Christian experience, which guided Schleiermacher in his exposition of the Christian faith, Ritschl lays more emphasis on the value of the Bible revelation, and is even more opposed to the intrusion of metaphysical speculation. In both these respects, he met the need of a period when speculative thought was less sure of its own conclusions, and when practical religious men were seeking a more secure basis for their faith.

Though Ritschl's theology may fairly be called anti-metaphysical, such a description is apt to mislead without some explanation. Ritschl did not despise metaphysics in its own domain, or deny its formal value in theology; but he did deny its value as a method of attaining truth in the sphere of religion, and he was very anxious to get rid of the erroneous metaphysics which had invaded theology from the earliest period of the Church. He maintained that when metaphysics entered the sphere of God and religion with the pretension of positive knowledge—instead of recognizing what Kant had proved as to its incompetence in that domain—it became bad metaphysics, and injurious to theology. This bad metaphysics has not only professed erroneously to establish some of the Christian verities, in particular the being of God, on a theoretical foundation; it has also entrenched itself in

most of the Christian doctrines, perverting their form, and so threatening to destroy their value for the Christian mind. The doctrine of God as the Absolute Being, the distinction between the nature or essence of God and His relative activities, the characterization of Christ's oneness with the Father as a union of essence; these are examples of the bad metaphysics that has weighed upon past theology. Setting aside such metaphysics, or rather pointing it back to its own sphere and its own badly neglected task, Ritschl holds that theology is based on the revelation which finds its classic expression in the Bible, and on the faith-experience which values that revelation.

We begin with Ritschl's doctrine of God and human sin, which are the presuppositions of his doctrine of redemption. God, as revealed in Christ, is the personal loving Will whose all-comprehensive end is the establishment of His kingdom among spiritual beings. To say that God's purpose is His glory, or Himself, is true, but tells us little; His concrete purpose is the realization of His love in a community of persons who are actuated by love to God and to one another, and who by their fellowship with God rise to spiritual dominion over the world.

Ritschl maintains this view rigorously against all conceptions that would modify or distort it. He repudiates the metaphysical doctrine of God as the Absolute Being, condemning it as an empty philosophical abstraction. He equally sets aside the Scotist doctrine of God as the indeterminate sovereign will, or as one who is above all law because He is the maker of all law: a conception which governs the Socinian doctrine and also the election-theory of Augustine and Calvin. He holds that God is Love, and that all His activities must be conceived as tending to the realization of His kingdom of grace. But he devotes special attention to the view that God is essentially a Judge; that His loving will is controlled and limited in its operation by a moral order which is the outcome of His own nature, and which makes the definite apportionment of rewards and punishments a necessity. This conception of God as being held by legal restrictions, and governing man after the fashion

of public law, he repudiates as unreasonable and unchristian for the following reasons. First, such a view implies that God has some nature or passive being distinct from His will. That is relatively true of a growing human personality; we have a right to distinguish between a man's original or acquired nature and the individual actions which issue from it and are limited by it. But we cannot apply such limitation of freedom to God. It is simply bad metaphysics to distinguish God's essence from His unchanging voluntary activity, or to conceive of the one as limited or constrained by the other. But further, the essential nature of moral law is obscured when we give it the form of civil or public law. Our public law recognizes that individuals have rights, and, as representing these rights, it requires the fulfilment of certain well-defined duties, threatening the delinquent with the loss of rights. Though the state does not rest altogether on force and fear, but depends largely on the willing conformity of the majority of people who have made obedience part of their moral ideal, yet the existence of the state renders it necessary to enforce the law on the law-breaker by judicial penalties which imply the forfeiture of his individual rights. But the moral law stands on a different footing; and in Christianity it receives quite a different content and form. It judges of outer action by inner disposition, and its ideal is love to God and man. While the state law entitles the man who conforms to it to demand the full recognition and safeguarding of his rights, the moral law does not allow any one to demand reward or compensation from God. And if the individual has no claim of right against God, how can the forms of state law be applicable to the relation? It may be held, however, that the analogy is so far applicable; just as the state for the fulfilment of its end and for its own preservation must punish the law-breaker, so God must, for His own honour and for the ends of His government, punish the sinner. Ritschl maintains that this God of punitive justice is simply an idol of theologians and really falsifies the Christian idea. He does not deny that God deals with men in respect of their sins for their

discipline and chastisement; he admits that the New Testament writers do occasionally, in the periphery of their teaching, imply that there is a Divine just requital on human activities. But this conception of God's activity does not belong to the highest standpoint; nor is it the fundamental conception of the New Testament. When Christ enjoins the love of one's enemies, and declares the Divine perfection to consist in this especial attribute, He clearly teaches a different view of what is fundamental in God. And finally—to pass over other objections—Ritschl holds that if the attribute of retributive legal justice were fundamental in God, and so unalterable, there could be no possibility of reconciliation for sinful men.

In contrast to such conceptions of God, formed by abstract metaphysics, or by a theology which confounds legal and moral relations, and so introduces a dualism into God's nature, Ritschl holds that the God of Christianity is a unity, and an intelligible unity. He is, namely, the Supreme Loving Will, whose activity is unchangeably directed to the one end of establishing and perfecting His kingdom in the spiritual life of humanity. Ritschl grants, however, that in our ordinary representation of God we quite naturally picture His activity in various lights. Thus it is natural and inevitable that, as we change our attitude to God, we should think of God as changing His attitude towards us. We view Him as a pitiful and compassionate God, and again as a God of wrath and anger; now as long-suffering and again as swift to chastise us; now as gracious, and now as severe; now as wroth over our sins and repenting of the good, and again, as taking us into favour and repenting Him of the evil He has done us. Yet God Himself does not change in this way; nor is His blessedness ever diminished. And so far the ordinary religious mind can correct its own subjective impressions; as when the sinner, who in his unregenerate state felt himself as suffering the punishment of an angry God, learns on becoming a Christian to revise these earlier thoughts, and to think of God's "judgments" as indications of a

Father's gracious chastisement. But the theologian must go further than this, and seek to correct the more naïve utterances of piety by the truer thought of God's unchanging love and unchanging blessedness. For God is not really subject to the changing passions which are due to surprise or disappointment. He surveys all time, and in the perfect knowledge of the Divine end and the certainty of its accomplishment He experiences all the blessedness of a realized purpose. It is true we cannot help picturing God in the modes of time (*sub specie temporis*); but in our theological thinking we must view all His activities in the light of eternity (*sub specie æternitatis*), as the time-expressions of an unvarying, unchanging Love.[1]

In his doctrine of sin, Ritschl sets aside as false and unscriptural the older doctrines of original righteousness and original sin; the former, as mistakenly presenting at the beginning what is the ideal and goal of human history, and the latter, as being the Augustinian perversion of Paul's teaching in Romans v. 12 ("For all have sinned"). He goes back here to the fundamental teaching of Scripture. Sin is what is opposed to God's will for us, the realization of His Kingdom. Since the Kingdom of God is both a religious and a moral ideal, implying both trustful fellowship with God and the loving activity which seeks to realize the Kingdom among men, sin must include the two contrary aspects. On the one hand, it is alienation from God, religious indifference or want of trust; on the other hand, it is selfish activity, or the preferring of lower to higher good. But though sin is individual, it has also a social aspect. It is not merely by example and imitation that men are bound morally together, but by the impress of personal influences which extend far beyond the sphere of conscious imitation. In this light one may speak of social sin, of which the several members of society share the responsibility in varying degrees. Thus in contrast with the Kingdom of God we may think of a Kingdom of Sin, constituted by the action of individuals, but becoming by the dissemination of

[1] Cf. *Rechtfertigung*, III, ch. iv.

influence, a state of sinfulness which spreads over the race.

In regard to the punishment of sin, and God's judgment of it, Ritschl rejects the Rabbinical doctrine that all evils are Divine punishments. Such a doctrine is refuted by Christian experience, nay by experience generally. If we define evil as what hinders our free activity, we simply cannot identify it with punishment. For evil is essentially relative, and the same events which prove evil to one person may prove good to another. A severe climate may be taken as a relative evil, yet it becomes good to those whose activity it stimulates; indeed it is just through the heroic fight with adverse circumstance that true manhood is enriched. A physical ailment may be an evil to one person, thwarting all his ambitions; while to another who has adjusted his life to it, it proves no permanent hindrance, but an opportunity of usefulness on new lines of activity. In the Christian life sickness, misfortune, all manner of obstacles and evils abound; yet the Christian can triumph over them, can use them as stepping-stones to higher things; and in any case he has the faith that all these things work together for good. But if the hindrances and evils of life may become helps, when rightly used or conquered, how can we consistently hold that all evils are punishments? In short, for those who take the right view of Providence, there are no absolute evils; for taken in connection with the ends they subserve, such hindrances, properly met, lead to spiritual gain and higher measures of freedom. Death itself is only relatively evil; viewed in its total significance it becomes good, in so far as it is the means to fuller freedom and life in God. In order, then, to reach an adequate idea of Divine punishment, we must enter the sphere of the inner consciousness. Sin carries with it alienation from God and a sense of guilt; and when this consciousness of guilt is upon us, we naturally think of certain evils as connected with our guilt, and as implying the withdrawal of God's favour. Divine punishments, therefore, are just those evils which we subjectively interpret to ourselves as punishment, when our trust in God is changed to fear of Him and our faith in His gracious

providence is overthrown. To this subjective interpretation of punishment Ritschl adds that God's judgment of sin—except in cases of high-handed and final rebellion—is that it proceeds from our imperfection; that it is not final in form, but due in large measure to ignorance. So Christ judged of it when He said: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." From this it follows that the redemption needed by man has no direct connection with the external evils of life, but bears simply on man's sense of guilt and of alienation from God, and his failure to realize God's Kingdom.

Passing next to the Person and work of Christ, Ritschl insists that the doctrine of Christ's divinity is naturally based on our estimate of His work, and that it is only an abstract metaphysics which separates the work from the Person. In the Greek-Christian period, redemption was conceived as the purifying and immortalizing, or, as it was expressed, the deifying of human nature; and Christ was accordingly viewed as conjoining His Divine nature with humanity, and thus reclaiming it and rendering it Divine and immortal. The later ages partly modified this general conception. Retaining the idea of Christ's nature as Divine, they represented Christ's work as done in and through His human nature, His Godhead giving this human work its unique value. At the Reformation some attempt was made to get rid of the abstractness of Greek thought, and to view the Divine Christ as revealing Himself in and through His saving work. Later, unfortunately, the Protestant Church lost its way in controversies about the Divine and human natures, setting the two in abstract opposition; and finally the doctrine of the Kenosis (the self-emptying of Christ's Divinity in order to a human incarnation) placed the Divinity of Christ outside His historical earthly life, and thus practically denied the Divinity of the Christ of history.

Ritschl himself goes back to the thought, emphasized by Luther and Melanchthon, that we must see the Divine Christ in the Divine service He rendered, and the saving work He achieved, in establishing the Kingdom of God, Just as the essence or nature of God is nothing distinct

from His eternal loving activity, so Christ's oneness with the Father is no oneness of abstract nature, but a oneness of will and fellowship. He sets this view in express opposition to those who still adhere to the abstractions of Greek thought. These metaphysicians hold that Christ's oneness with God the Father is a unity of essence or nature; and they have even imagined a third conception of oneness to represent the relation of the believer to Christ, namely, mystical union (*unio mystica*). The union of Christ with God is called a union of nature or essence; the union of believers with Christ is something less than essential union, something more than spiritual fellowship; and so they call it a "mystic union"—surely the essence of unintelligibility! If we conceive of God as the personal loving Will, whose end is the Kingdom of God among men, and of Christ as revealing and carrying out the same loving Will, is not that true Divinity? In reply to those who charge him with regarding Christ as a man and nothing more, because he refuses to accept their abstract metaphysics, Ritschl says: "If Christ by what He has done and suffered for my salvation is my Lord, and if, trusting for my salvation to the power of what He has done for me, I honour Him as my God, that is a value-judgment of a direct kind. It is not a judgment which belongs to the sphere of disinterested theoretic knowledge, like the formula of Chalcedon. When therefore my opponents demand in this connection a judgment of the latter sort, they simply show their inability to distinguish between scientific and religious knowledge, which means that they are not really at home in the religious realm." [1] He maintains, however, that Christ is to be regarded as unique in His own order. Saintly men may undoubtedly appear who attain more or less completely to spiritual union with God; but if they do, it will be because of Christ's impress upon them, and because they are members of His Kingdom. Or, as he puts it, Christ is the Son of God abidingly, ex natura; others become children of God ex gratia.[2]

[1] *Rechtfertigung*, III, 44.

[2] Cf. the discussion of these phrases, used by Bengel, in Ritschl's *Theologie und Metaphysik*, p. 29.

What, then, was the work of Christ in the light of which we now value His person? The older doctrine split up that work into three parts, corresponding to the three "offices" of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. Ritschl retains the distinction between Christ's prophetic and His priestly ministry as indicating two main aspects of the same work; but he considers the third aspect as comprehending the other two, and therefore as requiring no separate treatment.

In His prophetic work as revealer of God in word and deed, Christ stood in intimate and complete fellowship with the Father. The Divine Spirit was His "without measure," and abode with Him; He was in all His words and acts the organ of the Divine revelation. He was no mere channel of the Divine, however, but lived a human life under human conditions, and fulfilled the vocation of one who possessed a definite and individual moral personality. This fact is overlooked by the theology which conceives of Christ as really standing above moral law and "fulfilling all righteousness" only for the sake of others. We must not ignore His ethical personality as a man; but must rather think of Him as following a special human calling. His special vocation was to exercise moral leadership over humanity, and to establish God's Kingdom. This was His all-absorbing mission; and for its sake He put aside all family ties, all preoccupations about livelihood, and all the attractions of learning. His one task was to realize God's lordship in the world. His loyalty to this vocation explains His patience under suffering, and His mastery over all temptation to think of the joys of living, or of personal security. His death was thus a manifestation of His unswerving loyalty to His vocation. He faced this climax of His mission with the assurance that, since His appearance in Jerusalem took place unavoidably in the discharge of His calling, even His death would, under God, be subservient to this end. Here we pass from the ethical to the religious self-estimate of Christ. His work was entirely and uniquely God's work. His joy lay in the fact that He was doing the Father's will; this was His meat and drink and what

sustained Him in His task. Thus He revealed God to man; made God known in His very being as the Spirit and will of love, who is actuated by a quenchless desire to make men partakers of His Kingdom of blessedness.

But Christ's life was also a priestly ministry; and this ministry must be viewed as well in its bearing on Himself as in its value for others. As Ritschl rather awkwardly puts it, Christ was a priest "for Himself" before being a priest "for others." A priest is not one who does something instead of others; his approach to God is representative, symbolizing the approach of the people. So Christ was in the first place a priest for Himself. He Himself drew near to God, lived prevailingly with God in the fellowship of prayer as well as in active obedience. Again and again we find Him retiring from others to solitary prayer and private communion with God; and finally we see Him on the cross devoting Himself soul and body to God, in perfect self-sacrifice. The sacrifice on the cross was the culmination of His priestly ministry; for there He showed that perfect devotion which remains as the type of perfect spiritual religion.

There remains the question how this priestly life of sacrifice or devotion to God has the value of a priestly service for others. Ritschl's answer is simply this, that just as the priest, who draws near to God in the name of the community, represents the community's approach to God and so brings others into God's gracious presence, so Christ, whose whole life was spent in devotion to God, in faith, prayer and active obedience, has introduced His followers, His community, into the same relation of nearness to God. For their sakes Christ sanctified Himself, i.e., devoted Himself to God, that they too might be sanctified (not merely symbolically as in literal sacrifice, but) in truth; that they might be really brought near to God, and restored from their alienation to fellowship with the Father. Ritschl insists that this priestly and representative work of Christ is not to be understood in an exclusive sense—as though Christ did something which His followers are not called to do; but rather in an inclusive sense, seeing that those who are brought nigh

to God must themselves be sanctified, must themselves become royal priests unto God.

Thus Christ's work as prophet and His work as priest are but two aspects of the same work—the establishing of God's Kingdom by the fulfilment of His own personal vocation to that end. As prophet, He reveals to His followers the Divine unchanging will of love; and as priest, representing His followers by loyalty to His mission of love and nearness to God, He brings them also into God's fellowship, and guarantees God's grace to His community.

This explanation may appear abstract and meagre to those who have thought to discover something in the cross specifically different from the value of Christ's life. Ritschl, however, claims to stand on the original Protestant faith that Christ's redemptive work is seen in the whole course of His obedience. Hence he regards the death of Christ as the highest proof and expression of His triumphant loyalty to His mission, and His untroubled fellowship with God; and thus as the crowning stroke for the establishment of God's Kingdom in human life.

Ritschl proceeds to consider the results that have been achieved for Christ's community, and thereby for the world; and gathers these together in the conception of the Kingdom of God established among men. In this exposition one cannot but admire the patience with which Ritschl wades through the scholastic terminology of Protestantism, and the success with which he finally reduces it to the simpler terms of concrete Christian experience.

The great value of Ritschl's exposition lies in what Prof. W. James would have called his "thickness" of thought. Ritschl has all the richness and the many-sidedness of a thinker who has thoroughly explored the subject; and he shows at the same time the keenness of mind which enables him to set aside theological verbiage and mere philosophical abstraction, and to put in their place an articulated system of well-defined and concrete thought. In this last respect he has laid down the lines

for modern theology, and indeed for all thinking that is true to experience.

Ritschl has justly insisted that Christ's work has a personal aspect no less than a social; His prophetic and priestly ministry for others presupposes that He was in the first place a prophet and a priest "for himself." He has His own personal human life to live; and in this aspect we may regard His entire activity as a process in which He realized His own individual personality. Of every man it is true that before he can do anything of value to others, he must *be* something himself; the significance of his doings will be limited and determined by his significance as a person. Hence every man's activity may be viewed as expression of his personality as well as in its outward achievement for the good of others. We are entitled, therefore, to distinguish between Christ's personal realization of religion by faith, love and obedience to God, and His ministering work for the salvation of others.

While this is true, it may be doubted whether Ritschl was not too content to view Christ's work under the first aspect. It is certainly a service to theology to insist that the Redeemer of others must possess in His own person the ideal qualities of moral and religious personality which He seeks to convey to others. But the question still remains how this mediation of true life is to be accomplished. And in dealing with this second aspect of Christ's work, His ministration to others, and particularly in his exposition of Christ's priestly ministry, Ritschl's explanation exhibits a remarkable lack of completeness. No one has more thoroughly sifted the conditions and requirements of redemption, and no one has stated more clearly and fully the results of Christ's work; but the direct connection between Christ's work and the subsequent results of it has been very inadequately set forth. Thus, when we ask how the priestly ministry of Christ achieves the desired end of bringing men into God's presence and fellowship, Ritschl is content to point to the analogy of the ancient priesthood. Just as the priest represented the community as he went near to

God in worship and sacrifice, and so symbolized their approach to God, so Christ by His self-dedication represents His followers, and by His representative activity brings them into that intimacy with God which is the starting-point of their salvation. How can a theologian who insists continually on concreteness of thought be satisfied with such a metaphor? Ritschl returns to the concrete question later, when, dealing with the results of Christ's death, he considers the reason why forgiveness should be attached especially to Christ's cross. He gives here the somewhat roundabout explanation that the assurance of Divine grace comes from the entire ministry of Christ; but that, since the death of Christ was His supreme manifestation, it was natural that the supreme blessing of the kingdom He founded should be especially connected with that supreme act of His life. It does not seem to have occurred to Ritschl that the cross has a direct psychological value in the experience of believers, in enabling them to realize the Divine forgiveness.

The justice of this criticism may be seen in the fact that his followers have attempted to supplement his teaching on this point by various psychological considerations. We may here take the views of Harnack, Kaftan, and Härning in illustration.

A. Harnack agrees with Ritschl in the contention that the essential element in the redemption needed by man is the removal of the alienation from God, and the sense of distrust which goes with man's sense of guilt. This sense of distrust leads man to regard God as a wrathful Judge, who is sure to punish our sins. According to Harnack, the Cross of Christ is wonderfully fitted to meet the need of men burdened by such false, yet inevitable, conceptions of God's government; for they can read in the cross the vicarious punishment of their guilt, and the ground of reconciliation with the God of punitive justice. We have already noticed this remarkably inadequate view of the value of Christ's death, which finds the secret of its power in the fact that it may be accommodated to our false conceptions.[1] No earnest mind that believes

[1] Cf. Chapter xii.

in the permanent value of the cross can be satisfied to view it simply as playing to the gallery of our common illusions. But the very fact that such an explanation has been offered points to some incompleteness in Ritschl's own presentation of the cross.

A more adequate treatment of the psychological aspect of the cross is found in the *Dogmatik* of J. KAFTAN, which follows to a large extent the lines of Ritschl's thought. According to Kaftan, the cross is the compendium of God's revelation; and through it especially has the Divine forgiveness of sins become a world-historical reality. He distinguishes between forgiveness as an act of God, and forgiveness as a state of the believer. Treating it first in the active sense, he holds that God's forgiveness or justification of sinners achieves itself in the death of Christ. The cross, which is the crown and completion of Christ's ministry, represents God's justifying judgment on all believers; it is God's forgiveness brought to perfect expression. But since it is the forgiveness of a God who also seeks the moral good of the sinner, it is equally the expression of the judicial earnestness of His holiness. "The love of God has found there the demonstration which breaks down every doubt; God gave Him to death in order to rescue men from destruction. But no less is there revealed in the death of Christ the judicial earnestness of the Divine holiness. For Christ died because as the Holy One of God He came into irreconcilable conflict with sinners, in so far as, in the exercise of His calling, He judged the collective sin, which appeared in its most profound and dangerous form, exalting itself in the name of a professed zeal for God against God's holy and loving will. Thus His death as a personal deed unites the two opposite features whose inner harmony forms the moral paradox of forgiveness."[1] Kaftan expressly warns us, however, that this expression of God's holiness and judgment upon sin must not be referred to any judgment of God upon Christ. "The holy and judicial earnestness of God, which the sinner experiences in forgiveness as a judgment on sin, is by no

[1] *Dogmatik*, 56, 2.

means to be thought as directed against the man Jesus. What kind of judicial earnestness would that be, which judged the innocent instead of the guilty? Rather, in suffering death at the hands of sinners, Jesus is the active subject of the holiness of God as of His love; He is the bearer of God's equally holy and loving will. His death becomes a judgment on sin for all who learn by this deed of sinful men to measure what sin means, and who become deeply conscious of the complete worthlessness of all natural life and endeavour. It is the holiness of God which engages the Son in irreconcilable conflict with sinners; it is the love of God which lets this conflict end with the death of the Son rather than in the judicial destruction of sinners, so that He may convict and rescue them.[1] Kaftan deals similarly with forgiveness in the passive sense, as the subjective experience of the believer. "The Divine forgiveness, as expressed and secured in the death of the Saviour, awakens faith and justifies the conscience, confirming at the same time its word of condemnation. This is the paradox of forgiveness in and for the man who receives it. It casts to the ground and raises up; it condemns and yet forgives."[2]

It is somewhat surprising to find Kaftan conjoining with this view, which seems fairly complete in itself, the additional view that Christ's death mediates the remission of (eternal) punishment. Since the forgiveness of sins carries with it the remission of punishment, the death of Christ on the cross provides also for this need. And religious faith looks on Christ as the vicarious sufferer who has borne the punishment for sinners and so freed them from the curse of the law. This does not mean, Kaftan hastens to say, that Christ rendered a satisfaction to God's justice, or that God must punish in order to forgive; nor can we think that God allowed His wrathful judgment to fall on the Son of His love. But it means that without the redeeming work of Christ the punishment of condemnation would have fallen on sinners; and that Christ bore willingly all the evils which have come into the world as the consequence and punishment

[1] *Dogmatik*, 56, 2. [2] *Dogmatik*, 56, 3.

of sin. In justification of this new point of view Kaftan says: "The Christian remains still a natural man whose moral consciousness, in view of the continuance of sin, ever and anon takes on a legal character. He needs therefore such a recognition of the death of Christ as will mediate the transition from the legal state to the state of grace. He will recognize that in the sufferings of death Christ has borne what has come into the world as our punishment, and that we are freed thereby from eternal punishment."[1]

Kaftan protests that he has no intention of reviving the satisfaction theory; yet it may be questioned whether, having gone so far, he is not compelled to go further. If the doctrine of the Atonement is to be construed so as to appeal to the natural and legal-minded man, in order to help him over the transition stage, it must surely be presented in terms that are legal, and not simply in terms that appear legal. If, on the other hand, as Kaftan maintains, Christ did not suffer the full penalty of our sin—eternal death or its equivalent—and if His sufferings do not relieve us from similar sufferings, it is difficult to see what benefit the legal man will find in the phrase that Christ has vicariously borne our punishment. It seems pretty evident that we must either go further and construct, as Harnack did, a legal theory for the legal-minded man—one which will serve him, though in fact illusory—or else we must cut out this compromise altogether. Our conclusion, so far, must be that the Ritschlian school, while recognizing the lacuna in Ritschl's theory as to the specific significance of Christ's cross, has failed to supplement it satisfactorily.

A third representative of this school, TH. HÄRING, attempted to supplement Ritschl's doctrine by psychological considerations of a different kind. Without returning to the satisfaction theory or the Governmental view, he held that the priestly ministration seen in Christ's death fulfilled certain conditions which were necessary in order that God's grace might show itself to sinners as sin-forgiving and sin-conquering love. These conditions

[1] *Dogmatik*, 56, 4.

are not the satisfaction of justice by punishment, but faith and penitence. In an earlier work on *The Abiding Element in the Christian Faith,* he seems to have taken the position of McLeod Campbell, namely, that as forgiveness can only be fully realized when there is a complete repentance and an infinite abhorrence of sin, Christ has in this respect supplemented our deficiency. Especially on the cross He took upon Himself the burden of our sin, and paid homage in His very sufferings, as well as in His own bitter sorrow for human sin, to the inviolable order which unites sin and suffering. By this homage He supplemented the imperfection of our penitence; and thus our forgiveness is secured, seeing that God looks upon us in Christ who is the guarantee that we shall yet attain to a complete state of penitence and faith.[1] In a later work, however, he lays stress almost entirely on the value of the cross as producing faith and penitence in the believer, and so realizing the conditions in men for the reception of God's forgiveness. Christ's triumphant faith, even in the suffering of the cross, is a permanent source of faith in us; and His experience on the cross, when His heart is torn between sympathy for men and homage to God's holiness, is the most signal call to repentance. He emphasizes, too, that the worth of Christ's work before God is based on what that work achieves in human lives. He still holds, however, that when we realize the imperfection of our penitence and our faith, we can console ourselves with the thought of Christ's perfect faith, which is the source of ours; and thus in Him we can feel ourselves well-pleasing to God.

[1] Cf. Dorner's *Christian Doctrine*, 118; Ritschl's *Rechtfertigung*, III, 56.

CHAPTER XV

MODERN VIEWS OF ATONEMENT

(C) English Theology

It would be an endless task to review the innumerable theories of redemption which have appeared within recent times in the English-speaking world. It would be hazardous even to attempt a classification of the various standpoints represented. It seems advisable, therefore, to continue here also our method of selection, and, instead of vainly attempting to cover the whole ground, to give some account of theories which suggest new lines of thought. We may assume that the traditional theories—that of an equivalent satisfaction and that of a Governmental display—have been already sufficiently discussed; and our object will be rather to illustrate the teaching of those who have adopted a more frankly modern standpoint.

Among these, half-a-century ago, stood very prominently Horace Bushnell. His writings, though wanting in precision, still retain some of the warmth and earnestness of the great preacher; and they are none the less suggestive that they deal with Atonement from various and even divergent points of view. Probably we shall find them more suggestive than conclusive.

In an earlier work, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, Bushnell expressly repudiates all juristic and penal theories, and proceeds to base his own view on the principle of the vicarious suffering of love. Love is the highest thing in the universe; and it reveals itself in reference to the fallen as essentially vicarious in character. "Given the

universality of love, the universality of sacrifice is given also." We have only to apply this universal principle, familiar to us all, to understand Christ's work of Atonement. The ministry of Christ is God's expression of Himself; for there we see His gracious compassion and His holy love going forth to save man from sin. "Christ, in what is called His vicarious sacrifice, simply engages, at the expense of great suffering and even of death itself, to bring us out of our sins themselves and so out of their penalties; being Himself profoundly identified with us in our fallen state, and burdened in feeling with our evils." The "bearing of sin" is to be interpreted on the analogy of the saying that Christ "took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Christ's ministry shows a moral power, gradually accumulating till it reaches its climax in the cross, for the renovation of human character. This irresistible moral force works by way of forgiveness; but essentially it is "a transaction moving on character in souls—a regenerating, saving, truth-subjecting, all-restoring inward change of life—in one word, the establishing of the Kingdom of God or of heaven among men, and the gathering finally of a new-born world into it."

Yet Bushnell admits that most moral theories like his own are open to the objection that they lay too little emphasis on God's government and law. By way of meeting this need Bushnell devotes a large part of his work to show how the law of God's judicial providence is manifested in the natural retributions that fall upon sin; retributions which are not abrogated or annulled by Christ's sacrifice, but run on concurrently with the workings of God's mercy. He seeks further to supplement his own view by emphasizing the value of the figure of sacrifice and the thought-forms of the altar. Once we have rectified our conception of sacrifice, and seen its true significance, and have found in the cross a real cleansing and sin-removing power, the sacrificial metaphor may be freely used, and helps to give to the moral theory its needed objectivity. "When I conceive that Christ is my offering before God, my own choice Lamb and God's, brought to the slaying and that for my sin, my thought

moves wholly outward and upward, bathing itself in the goodness and grace of the sacrifice. Doubtless there will be a power in it, all the greater that I am not looking after power, and that nothing puts me thinking of effects upon myself. In this manner coming unto Christ, or to God through Christ, in the symbols of sacrifice, we make an escape as it were from ourselves and that state of consciousness which is the bane of religion; an escape, I must frankly admit, which is none the less necessary when we conceive that Christ has come into the world, not to expiate sin, but to be a power upon it; furthermore an escape which God has provided, to make Him more completely a power. For it is in these symbols that God contrives to get us out of ourselves into the free state of faith and love, and to become the new inspiration of life in our hearts. And accordingly we should find in the ready and frequent use of these symbols our best means of grace, if only we could have them clear of misconstructions that often fatally corrupt their meaning." [1]

This return of Bushnell to the "altar-terms" has been hailed by advocates of the satisfaction theory as an admission that the moral theory is by itself practically powerless, and as a proof that Bushnell feels its inadequacy.[2] It is not true, however, that Bushnell's mind is working back to any satisfaction theory; he is only seeking to supplement his view of the moral efficacy of the cross by asking what there is objectively in the cross to make it capable of producing these moral or spiritual results. Instead, however, of looking for the desired objectivity in the historical facts viewed in the light of Christ's personality, Bushnell here thinks to gain his end by employing the language of ritual sacrifice. One might reasonably wonder at his enthusiasm for a figure of speech which, he himself admits, is so liable to misconstruction, and which harmonizes so little with his own fundamental view. The whole virtue of Christ's life and work lies, according to Bushnell, in its manward significance; why, then, should he adopt as the most fitting

[1] *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, pp. 7, 11, 13, 92, 337, 462.
[2] Cf. Crawford: *Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 377.

objective presentment of the cross the figure of a sacrifice to God? Why does he first present Christ's work as essentially the forthgoing of God's love to men, and end by returning to the language of ritual sacrifice?

Bushnell himself was dissatisfied with the small degree of objectivity added to his theory by the use of the thought-forms of the altar. In a later work on *Forgiveness and Law* he revises his theory, and discovers a new aspect of Atonement which is not inconsistent with the moral theory. In this revision he is evidently guided by the desire to present the cross in a more objective light, as a real propitiation. Following the hint given in certain paradoxical utterances of John Wessel, a pre-Reformer, and of others, indicating that God was self-propitiated on the cross, Bushnell proceeds to give the thought a concrete moral interpretation, and to illustrate it from the psychology of forgiveness.

He first considers the conditions of a complete human forgiveness, and rightly enough protests against the shallow thought that the mere utterance of the words "I forgive" represents the entire duty of the injured party. "A good man lives in the unquestionable sway of universal love to his kind. If, then, one of them does him a bitter injury, will he therefore launch an absolute forgiveness on him? If he were nothing but love—if he were no complete moral nature—he might. But he is a complete moral nature, having other involuntary sentiments that come into play alongside of love and partly for its sake. The sense of being hurt by wrong, indignation against wrong done to others, disgusts to what is loathsome, contempt of lies, hatred of oppression, anger hot against cruel inhumanities—all these animosities or revulsions of feeling fasten their grip on the malefactor sins and refuse to let go." Such feelings might be drummed to sleep, but perhaps they were not meant to go to sleep; rather, some propitiation in view of them is necessary; and the good man must somehow propitiate himself. "Is he to be blamed that he has so many of these dissentient feelings struggling in him to obstruct his forgiveness? No, not in the sense that he has them,

but only in the sense that he does not have them mitigated or propitiated so as to be themselves in consent or subjected by sacrifice. Let him find how to plough through the bosom of his adversary by his tenderly appreciative sympathy, how to appear as a brotherly nature at every gate of the mind, standing there, as in cost, to look forgiveness without saying it; and he will find, however he may explain it or not explain it, that there is a wonderful consent in his feeling somehow, and that he is perfectly atoned (at-one-d) both with himself and his adversary." He shows by various illustrations how this sacrificing activity is the key to a full and genuine forgiveness, and fits the facts of concrete experience. Save the wrong-doer by making sacrifice for him as a brother; and you not only heap coals of fire on his head, but you become so reconciled in your own nature and attitude that you can completely forgive. In such a case, "the forgiveness in you is potentially complete, though it should never be actually sealed upon him. You have taken his sin upon you in the cost you have borne for his sake; and what you have borne thus freely for him quells that irreducible something, that dumb ague of justice, that was disallowing your forgiveness. It is even as if there had been a great sacrifice transacted in your soul's court of sacrifice, by which your condemnations that were blocking your sensibilities have been smoothed and soothed and taken away. Under so great patience and cost, the forgiving charities are all out in your feeling, fresh and clean and swinging the censers of their worship to pay the fragrant honours due."

Bushnell does not hesitate to apply this moral pathology to the sacrifice of Christ. It is not meant that Christ went to the cross simply to mitigate or propitiate His own feelings. The good man does not make sacrifices for his offending brother in order to atone himself into gentleness and forgiveness; it is the offending brother, not himself, he has in view; but in the stress of his sacrifice he also finds his moral antagonism propitiated and dissolved away. So in the case of Christ, who is one with God. "God is put in arms against wrong-

doers, just as we are, by His moral disgusts, displeasures, abhorrences, indignations, revulsions, and what is more than all, by His offended holiness; and by force of these partly recalcitrant sentiments, He is so far shut back in the sympathies of His love that He can nerve Himself to the severities of government so long as such severities are wanted. He is not less perfect because these antagonistic sentiments are in Him, but even more perfect than He would be without them; and a propitiation is required, not because they are bad, but only to move them aside when they are not wanted. . . . And He will forgive, without damage to His character, just when His love, in making cost for His enemy, gains that enemy to Himself." Finally, he insists that the removal of these pathological antagonisms which check God's personal forgiveness does not in any way imply the removal of God's coercive discipline on human life. "The penal sanctions work on still in the man by natural causation after he is forgiven, till they are worn out or winnowed away by the supernatural causations of grace in his life."[1]

We cannot but admire the way in which Bushnell breaks away from the more formal lines of thought, and builds up his theory of a Divine self-propitiation on the common analogies of our psychological experience. One cannot wonder that the great preacher was not quite satisfied with his own moral theory; for "the universal law of sacrifice" does not solve all problems. But instead of seeking the desired objectivity of view in a thorough study of the concrete facts of history, and showing how the cross is to men the expression of the Divine forgiveness, he has ignored the facts of history, and constructed a new mythological scheme that is marked by the worst kind of anthropomorphism. This moral pathology, resting on the psychology of our imperfect growth in forgiveness, is quite inapplicable to the Divine character. It is true that the good man, being imperfect, fails to forgive with any ideal completeness of forgiving; and that it is only when he actually serves his erring neighbour and makes sacrifice for him that he

[1] *Forgiveness and Law*, pp. 38–57.

disarms and dissolves his antagonistic sentiments. Now Bushnell admits that so far as these antagonisms indicate imperfection, they are not to be attributed to Christ and God. But if we leave the imperfect pathological conditions out of account, and consider such moral antagonisms as are morally justifiable and right, why should we speak of atoning them out of existence? Why should God set them aside? Does He not as a fact show this constant antagonism to wrong-doing by His coercive discipline? The human analogy entirely breaks down here, because, in the illustration given by Bushnell, the sentiments set aside or put out of range are just those natural antagonisms which are less than moral, and which have to be mastered—as they often are in fact—by service rendered to the wrong-doer.

It is curious to notice that Bushnell himself practically admits the failure of the analogy used; as when he contrasts our human forgiveness, which is incomplete until by sacrificing endeavour we have mastered our hostile feeling, with the forgiveness of God, which he declares to be eternal and dateless. "His blessed forgivenesses were all in Him and ready grown before Christ arrived, and before the world was made; and what He does among us by His sacrifice is to have its value in revealing under time how, by sacrifice and much cost above time, the Divine charities were always mitigating His dispositions, and flowing out, as it were by anticipation, subduingly on His enemies. The transactional matter of Christ's life and death is a specimen chapter, so to speak, of the infinite book that records the eternal going on of God's blessed nature within. Being made in His image, we are able to see His moral dispositions always forging their forgiveness, under the reactions of endurance and sacrifice, as we do ours. And this is the eternal story of which Christ shows us but a single leaf."[1]

We must make some allowance for the difficulty of representing change of feeling and disposition in a perfect and eternal being; but it is surely a contradiction to say that forgiveness was complete in God before the world

[1] *Forgiveness and Law*, p. 60.

was made, and still to picture Him as needing to propitiate Himself and smooth away the antagonisms that hinder forgiveness by sacrifice. The eternal forgiveness simply blots out the necessity of self-propitiation; and so the end of the cross cannot be conceived as the changing of God's disposition. Thus, when the theory is pressed, it turns out that the sacrifice of Christ conceived as self-propitiation is only an unreal display.

We turn from the theories of this genial but eccentric thinker to consider another class of theory, whose eccentricity is of a different kind. As we have already indicated, modern theology has turned with new interest to the ancient Greek-Christian thought, and many of the earlier view-points have been revived. Among these the Platonic realism of the early Church has found favour, as supplying a new basis for the doctrine of the Atonement. It will be remembered that in the early Greek period Christ's union with human nature was presented in a realistic way, in accordance with the common Platonic thought which substantiates generic ideas. Redemption was found in the very fact that Christ, the Divine Logos, had at the incarnation conjoined Himself with human nature, i.e., with the very substance of all mankind; so that His victory over sin, death and Satan was the victory of all mankind. Thus the union of believers with Christ was not conceived as a legally constituted relation, nor as a spiritual union of heart and will, but as an actual metaphysical identity. With some minds of a speculative or mystic cast, such ideas have possessed a wonderful attraction, both in Germany and in England. As bearing on the doctrine of Atonement they have been regarded as setting in a new light the representative character of Christ's person and work; and accordingly they have been employed by theologians of various schools, and served as a basis for many theories. We may take as example of this revived realism of thought the very divergent theories of Dean Alford, R. C. Moberly, and F. D. Maurice.

Dean Alford uses the realistic conception of Christ's

human nature purely for the purpose of avoiding the conceptions of imputed sin and righteousness, or the transference of guilt and merit in the penal-satisfaction theory—conceptions which, as being no longer necessary, he considers himself at liberty to condemn as impossible or contrary to justice. "The death of Christ was not vicarious in the sense of one man suffering for another, which would be most repugnant to God's justice, as reflected in the conscience of us all. But you will ask: Was not that victim truly Man, very man as we are? Yes, blessed be God, He was the Man Christ Jesus; and yet, I repeat, He was not *a man*. He took upon Him not a human personality, so that He should be two persons, God and man at the same time; but He took into union with His Divine person and nature *the manhood*, the entire nature of man—the one nature and flesh and blood and capabilities and sympathies of a human soul. And thus He was God manifest in the flesh: very God, as being in person and nature and essence the eternal Son of the Father,—and very Man, as being born into the world, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. What, then, let us inquire, is that body of Christ, which is hanging, pierced and torn, on the cross? . . . That body did not belong to *one man*, hereafter to be summoned to give account of himself to God, and separated in that account from all his fellow-men; but it belonged to the Son of God, our Maker and our Redeemer, Who was pleased to reveal Himself in it for our redemption; and it was not the body of *a man*, but the body of Man—of mankind—the pattern and centre and root and head of that nature which is common to all of us, and in which every being of all nations, kindred and language, has a share. Then the flesh of Christ is His flesh, as He is God; the property and tabernacle of God, in a peculiar manner His own. But in it He has no human property; the human property in it is vested in all the sons and daughters of Adam; it is *my* flesh and *your* flesh, and the flesh of all of us, as we are men; the common property of us all, so that in it we are summed up and represented; and when it was offered up

we were offered up; 'if one died for all, then all died.' And so when that Victim hung upon the cross, it was not the slaying of one mere man for another, which is impossible; nor was it a mere symbolic sacrifice, like those under the old law; but it was the offering up of *Human Nature* in its head and root,—a taking away of sin by its penalty being paid to the uttermost. . . . And what was the effect of this sacrifice on the cross—the immediate and universal effect of it? At once, human nature, our manhood, all mankind, was in the sight of the Father acquitted from the guilt of sin, and received into His favour."[1]

This theory of Alford, which curiously combines the satisfaction theory with ideas drawn from Platonic realism, may be briefly criticized both as to its logic and in its bearing on the doctrine of Atonement. He reasons that, since the human nature of Christ consisted of a true body and a reasonable soul, but not of personality (that being purely Divine), the human ownership of that nature must be vested in all human persons, in all mankind. But why should this impersonal human nature of Christ, which belongs to the Divine Personality, belong to any human personality at all? The identification of the impersonal nature of Christ—which is in any case an individual soul and body—with the soul and body of all mankind, is no more justifiable than the absolute identification of myself, *qua* human nature, with my fellow-men. My soul and body belong to me; Christ's soul and body belong to Christ; and no generic or moral identity can destroy the difference.

But even if we admit the startling equation: Christ's human soul and body = human nature = the common property of mankind, it is hard to see what advantage will be reaped in the interpretation of the Atonement. For surely it is not our human nature that needs reconciliation with God, but our human personalities, our individual characters; and therefore, if nature and personality are kept separate as they are on this hypothesis, the Atonement has been made for those factors

[1] Cf. *Sermons.*

of our being that needed no Atonement. Alford springs over this difficulty by making another surprising identification, namely, that of the human nature of Christ with all human personalities. There is certainly agility of thought here, but the theory must be in a bad way which requires such fantastic ways of vindication. And even if we pass by these metaphysical vagaries, what is gained for Alford's theory of satisfaction? The difficulty connected with the imputation of sin to Christ, and of Christ's righteousness to men, has been so far removed; but the other difficulty remains standing, and even acquires greater force, namely, that if Christ died for all mankind, and paid the due debt for all sin, then all mankind have paid the penalty, and are no more subject to Divine condemnation and punishment.

A similar Realism is presented in connection with the satisfaction theory of R. C. Moberly, whose views on the perfect penitence of Christ in the name of humanity have been already considered. Moberly does not accept the crude thought of a Personal Divine Christ who has assumed an impersonal human nature; rather he would read the Divine within the human, and the person within the nature. But he holds that Christ is man not generically, but inclusively; He was not a man, but humanity; He "recapitulated" the human race in His perfect nature. So he can affirm that "Christ *was* humanity perfectly penitent, perfectly righteous"[1]; and maintains that Christ in His death, where He confessed the sin of humanity in a spirit of perfect penitential holiness, presented a satisfaction which by virtue of His identity with humanity, is humanity's own offering to God.

It is possible that this penitential theory would not have appealed so strongly to Moberly, had he not been able to identify Christ's humanity with all humanity, or all human persons. For the impossibility of a transference of repentance is even more obvious than that of a transference of penalty. But if Christ and mankind are identified, the difficulty is clearly obviated. Indeed, if

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, p. 404.

Christ's human nature includes all mankind, there seems no reason why it should not include the sins of mankind as well as their repentance. In point of fact, however, both Alford and Moberly identify Christ's humanity with mankind and again distinguish the two, according to the exigencies of the particular moment. The logical dilemma faces both. If Christ's humanity = all men, than all men having died in Christ are free from the law and its claims, and have no need of further repentance. On the other hand, if Christ's human nature is distinct from mankind, then, since all men did not die on the Cross, no man can receive forgiveness unless there is a "transference" of merit, or unless he repents and atones for himself. Dr. Alford's theory seems to be impaled on the first horn of this dilemma, and Dr. Moberly's on the second. But the difference is not very material; the dilemma extinguishes both.

But F. D. MAURICE was by far the strongest exponent of this realistic conception. Maurice was philosophically a convinced Platonist; he conceived that behind the world of individual things there was another world consisting of their eternal types or species. These worlds are so distinct that Maurice ascribes them, as other Platonists have done, to two separate acts of creation. Thus he refers the two stories of creation in Genesis, the one, to the creation of the eternal species, the other, to the creation of the individuals. This species, or type, or universal is taken as the true or proper nature of the individual; it is the ideal truth or essence of the thing.

He applies this naïve realism to explain the relation of Christ as Son of Man to humanity. The Son of God is also the Son of Man; that is, the ideal typical man; even before His incarnation we must think of Him as man, the root and archetype of all mankind. He is the eternal truth of man, the Image of God after which all individual men have been formed. He is "the root of righteousness" in every man—the true and proper self in each. Thus when Christ says; "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me," He identifies Himself with all men, the least as well as the

greatest. Or again, when Paul speaks of Christ being revealed *in him*, the meaning is that Christ is really in every man, and only needs to be revealed and recognized.

It is in the light of this unity of Christ with every man that Maurice proceeds to set forth his doctrine of reconciliation. The barrier between man and God arises from man's own blindness and sin; and the cross is the revelation and power needed to remove it. It is the Mercy-seat where God meets with us in forgiveness and love, and where the true life of self-surrender is unveiled. "It brings Divine Love and human suffering into direct and actual union. It shows Him who is one with God and one with man perfectly giving up that self-will which had been the cause of all men's crimes and all their misery." "The Scripture says: 'The Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world.' All orthodox teachers repeat the lesson; they say, Christ came to deliver sinners from sin. This is what the sinner asks for. Have we a right to call ourselves Scriptural or orthodox if we change the words and put 'penalty of sin' for 'sin'; if we suppose that Christ destroyed the connection between sin and death—the one being the necessary wages of the other,—for the sake of benefiting any individual man whatever? If He had, would He have magnified the Law and made it honourable?" The satisfaction God demands is simply the overthrow of the sin, the self-will, pride and rebellion of man; and this is presented by humanity in the perfect self-surrender of the cross. "Christ satisfied the Father by presenting the image of His own holiness and love; in His sacrifice and death all that holiness and love came forth completely. How can we tolerate for an instant that notion of God which would represent Him as satisfied by the punishment of sin, not by the purity and graciousness of the Son?" "Supposing, then, the Father's will to be a will to all good; supposing the Son of God, being one with Him, and Lord of men, to obey and fulfil in our flesh that will by entering into the lowest condition into which men had fallen through their sin; supposing this Man to be for this reason an object of continual complacency to His Father,

and that complacency to be fully drawn out by the Death of the Cross; supposing His death to be a sacrifice, the only complete sacrifice ever offered, the entire surrender of the whole spirit and body to God; is not this, in the highest sense, Atonement; is this not the true sinless root of humanity revealed; is not God in Him reconciled to man? Is not the cross the meeting-place between man and man, between man and God?"[1]

Maurice's theory has been strangely interpreted as a doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, and a sort of counterpart to Piscator's doctrine of satisfaction by passive obedience; the satisfaction consisting here in the active obedience seen in Christ's self-surrender.[2] But this is a misunderstanding, and one to which the words of Maurice give no colourable justification. The superficial analogy which may be drawn between this theory and Anselm's or any other theory of vicarious merit or obedience should not blind us to the fact that Maurice's theory is neither a doctrine of substitution, nor a doctrine of satisfaction in the common sense. In the first place, it is not a theory of substitution, but a theory of identity; to speak of any vicariousness of obedience or transference of merit would be to ignore the realism which lies at the foundation of the theory. Maurice himself of set purpose avoids such expressions as "vicarious" and "substitution," as being unscriptural and misleading.[3] Rather, we are to think of Christ as man's representative, embracing the human nature of all mankind. He represents the proper self of every man; He is the root of righteousness within us all; so that His obedience is humanity's obedience, and His self-surrender is humanity's return to God. And secondly, Christ's self-surrender on the cross is not a "satisfaction" to God in the old sense; it is not an appeasement of God with a view to change God's disposi-

[1] *Theological Essays*, ch. vii.

[2] Cf. Cave: *Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 375, where Maurice's theory is said to be that of "a substitutionary offering of obedience."

[3] Cf. *Doctrine of Sacrifice*, Preface, xlv–xlvi; also *Theological Essays*, p. 124: "If we speak of Christ as taking upon Himself the sins of men by some artificial substitution, we deny that He is their actual representative."

tion or to remove moral barriers to forgiveness; it is a satisfaction only in the sense that it is supremely pleasing to God to see His own goodness and holiness reflected in the life of humanity. It is not a sacrifice which so satisfies God as to induce or to enable Him to forgive, but one which satisfies God because of its redemptive value for Man. Maurice expressly distinguishes between the true satisfying sacrifice, "the sacrifice which manifests the mind of God,—which proceeds from God, which accomplishes the purposes of God in the redemption and reconciliation of His creatures, which enables those creatures to become like their Father in Heaven by offering up themselves;—and the sacrifices which men have dreamed of in one country or another, as means of changing the purposes of God, of converting Him to their mind, of procuring deliverance from the punishment of evil, while the evil still exists."[1] When Maurice declares that God's complacency is fully drawn out, or evoked, by the death of the cross, he does not for a moment imagine that the satisfaction thus given to God is a precondition to man's redemption, but simply means that the craving in God's heart for man's redemption is satisfied, and that there is joy in heaven over the redemptive work accomplished by Christ in humanity. In no proper sense, therefore, can this theory be called a satisfaction theory, and still less a theory of substitutionary satisfaction.

The objectionable feature of Maurice's theory lies in the conception on which it is based, namely, the identification of Christ as man with all mankind. A truer philosophy will rather teach us that the species or universal man only exists in the individuals, and that Christ as man was an individual of the species, that is, a man among men. The organic union of Christ with believers, through the spiritual power that emanates from the Saviour, is indeed a Christian and a favourite Pauline and Johannine doctrine; but the metaphysical identity of the human Christ with all men whatsoever is a conception that finds little support in Scripture, and will scarcely commend

[1] *Doctrine of Sacrifice*, Preface, xliv.

itself to the modern mind. We willingly admit that there is a Christ-nature in every man, and that beneath all his folly and sin there remains something of the true image of God and of Divine potentiality; but to proceed straightway to identify this ideal self, this Christ-spirit in man with the Christ who died on Calvary, is hardly compatible even with Platonic philosophy, and is assuredly repugnant to common sense.

That such mystification should be employed to prop up the declining doctrine of a "finished atonement," serves only to suggest that the traditional presupposition which still weighs with many minds is not necessary; and that the cross of Christ has its true objective value, not as isolated from its later historical issues, but simply as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It may be humbling to the theologian to come down from such lofty but rather incomprehensible mysticism to the simple faith that the death of Christ has its virtue as a dynamic in human lives, and that the Atonement is no inexplorable mystery at all, but a matter that may be gauged by common Christian experience. But, after all, it is not our generic and abstract "human nature" that needs to be redeemed, but our well-known individual selves; and that we should be saved from sin without being conscious of it, or affected by it, is quite incredible. Thus, unless we return to the older theory that Christ's death worked a distinct and immediate change in the mind of God toward man, or in His moral relations to men, we seem forced to conclude that its real virtue lay in its spiritual effects on human lives, and that Christ's faith in submitting to it harmonized with God's aim in permitting or ordaining it, as the means of saving us from our selfish selves and lifting us into the life Divine.

If now we leave aside the older theories of satisfaction, which are still largely represented in English theology, especially in the Governmental form, and also those newer aspects of thought such as have been illustrated above, we find a large and increasing consensus of opinion,

represented both in theology and in common Christian faith, which finds the value of the cross in its revealing and dynamic power over human lives. In opposition to former juristic or legal theories, these modern restatements of the Atonement may rightly enough be characterized as moral or ethical theories. Apart from this contrast, however, the term is liable to misunderstanding; for these theories are religious as well as moral; they insist only that the revelation of the cross and the Divine mind therein shall be read in the light of the highest ethical conception of the love of God.

Within the general framework of the ethical-religious theory there is room for great diversity of view in detail and even in principle. One of the most radical differences is seen in the divergent views as to the moral order, or God's moral government of the world. We have already indicated that the satisfaction theory rests on the conception that God's dealing with man has the character of judicial retribution—a quite erroneous premise—and also on the conception of Christ's vicarious death as offering a full satisfaction to the judicial government—a quite erroneous conclusion. Many modern theologians, however, reject the conclusion, but maintain the premise of God's moral and retributive sovereignty. That is, they agree with their opponents in upholding a nomistic view of God's moral government; they only differ from them in adhering to it more strictly, and repudiating "vicarious" punishment as a violation of the presupposed moral order. It may be questioned, however, whether any satisfactory theory of redemption can be combined with a view of God's government as inexorably retributive in character.

As an example of this standpoint, we may take the theory of James Martineau, who seeks to bring his view of the moral order into harmony with our faith in Divine pity and grace. Dr. Martineau insists very impressively upon the inexorable retributions of God's moral government. "If we are to trust in God's holiness, there must be a law, sure and universal, that binds together guilt and punishment; a law without exception in its grasp,

without swerving in its execution. It is to reveal this law that the misgivings of conscience strike us with their awful voice; that spectral shadows flit across the heart of guilty gaiety; that boldness before the sin sinks into abjectness after it; that in proportion as we lose our moral count, and the skein of life, wound no longer smoothly off, is ravelled into a broken and tangled waste, we rush into vain distractions to quell the fever of our secret misery, and yet find no peace. . . . No shade of doubt is to be cast upon this faith; it is as much our primitive, instinctive guidance, as our expectation of the future from the past. As, for purposes of knowledge, it is appointed us to believe that the sun which has risen to-day will rise to-morrow; so, for the ends of duty, it is given us to feel that sin has a bitter fruit to ripen, and that having sown the wind we shall reap the whirlwind. This is the corner-stone of our whole structure of confidence in the moral government of God."

Martineau, however, proceeds to distinguish between God's external government and his interior nature or mind, and maintains that while the exactest justice prevails within the one sphere, His pity and forgiveness are possible within the other. "God's word has gone forth which binds together guilt and pain, and it cannot return unto Him void. Not one consequence which he has annexed to wrong-doing will fail to appear with relentless punctuality; no miracle will interpose to conduct away the lightning of retribution. Within that realm of law and nature He is inexorable, and has put the freedom of pity quite away; and as the Atlantic storm turns not aside to avoid the ship where sanctity or genius are afloat, so neither does the tempest of justice falter and pause to spare the head uplifted in repentant prayer. But it is otherwise with respect to the soul and person of the sinner himself; the sentiments of God towards him are not bound; and if, while the deed of the past is an irrevocable transgression, the temper of the present is one of surrender and return, there is nothing to sustain the Divine aversion or hinder the outflow of infinite pity. Free as our soul is to come back and cry at the

gate; so free is He to open and fold us gently to His heart again. Weak indeed from the waste of all our strength, lame with our many wounds, in peril from our dim sight, and pain from treasured agonies, we must still be; and God can only say, 'My poor child, I cannot help thee here; this burden must thou carry to its end.' But still the penitent lives no outcast life; the light of reconciliation is upon him; he suffers and is very faint; and often his heavy cross weighs him to the earth; but he can bear the scourge of nature, now that he is withered by no scorching look of God." [1]

If this presentation of our experience is correct, we shall have to admit that judgment triumphs over mercy, and that the law has left little room for the gospel. We are asked to believe that Heaven's retributive justice reigns through all human history, that no penitence or atonement can avail to rescue a sinner from the grasp of a law which demands and will have the due equivalent of penal suffering. God may, indeed, in hidden ways reveal to the penitent His fatherly pity; but His own hands are bound, and the sinner must dree his weird, and drink his cup of punishment to the last dregs. As Judge, God is all powerful, His lightnings never fail to strike; His moral government verifies itself as surely as the sun rises day by day; but as Father, He is a weak and ineffectual Deity, who can only pity us as we pursue our fate, and by His pity redeem us from absolute despair. A God with His hands tied, whose love cannot act because limited by the prior claims of a retributive justice—is such an inharmonious conception either Christian or rational?

That there is a moral order in the world in the sense that it goes well with the righteous and ill with the wicked, and that suffering in some shape or form haunts the steps of the wrong-doer, is surely a well-attested fact of experience. But it is equally well-attested by experience that the evil caused by wrong-doing strikes more than the wrong-doer, and further that there is no exact equivalence between sin and suffering. Both as an ideal and as

[1] *Hours of Thought*, Vol. I, pp. 106–113.

a (supposed) fact of life, this view of an inexorable retributive order, according to which each individual's sin returns with exactly proportionate punishment on the individual's head, is more than questionable. We shall return to this later, when treating of the meaning and value of punishment. Meanwhile one may notice how Martineau and others lay a quite mistaken emphasis on the moral order as being equally inviolable with the laws of nature, and therefore absolutely unalterable in its result. We pass by the Deistic conception that God is bound by His own laws; and simply wish to point out that no one law of nature absolutely determines any single event whatsoever. If I throw a stone in the air, the physicist can say what parabola it will describe according to the laws of motion; but the stone may not describe that parabola; will not, in fact, if it land in a tree, or fall on to a roof. The law tells me what tends to happen, or what happens *in abstracto*, but never what will infallibly happen. In comparing the moral order with the laws of nature, therefore, the exponents of a rigid retributive order seem to forget that these laws have only an abstract validity; their effects being continually nullified, sublated or modified in the concrete facts of experience.

It is characteristic of later theology that the historical facts which issued in the death of Christ are taken as the starting-point of the deeper appreciation of its meaning. Outwardly viewed, in respect of its natural human causes, Christ's death was the result of His conflict with the prevailing type of Judaism, which had become concerned for its prestige and power. It was a tragedy in which Christ was overborne by the forces arrayed against Him, and made a victim of the world's sin. It has its analogy in other like tragedies, where righteousness enters into conflict with evil, and for the time being suffers outward defeat. It took place in accordance with the law of human nature, that when evil is attacked, it will fight for its life, and use all means to silence its adversary. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, puts this in his own striking fashion, and in words which are substantially

true, though often criticized: "Christ came into collision with the world's evil, and He bore the penalty of that daring. He approached the whirling wheel, and was torn to pieces. He laid his hand upon the cockatrice's den, and its fangs pierced Him. It is the law which governs the conflict with evil. . . . The Son of Man, who puts His naked foot on the serpent's head, crushes it; but the fang goes into His heel."[1] He dared to face the world's sin, and suffered the consequence. "He did not adroitly wind through the dangerous forms of evil, meeting it with expedient silence. Face to face, and front to front, He met it, rebuked it, and defied it, and yet, as truly as he is a voluntary victim whose body, opposing the progress of the car of Juggernaut, is crushed beneath its monstrous wheels, was He a victim to the world's sin; because pure, He was crushed by impurity; because just and real and true, He waked up the rage of injustice, hypocrisy and falsehood."[2] We may say, then, that Christ died according to natural law, if we include under nature our sinful human nature; the law illustrated in His death was the law that governs the activity of vile and vengeful humanity. Fight for any good cause, and those who uphold the bad will have their vengeance on you; resist the devil, and,—in the first place—the devil will flee *at* you. The Jewish Sanhedrin being composed as it was, and Christ being what He was, the result was historically, and by the laws of human nature, inevitable.[3]

But this explanation of Christ's death, which presents it as the triumph of human hate, throws no immediate light on its Divine meaning and value. The tragedies of life elicit human pity and indignation, but cannot be said to have any redemptive significance. Accordingly, modern theologians seek to bring out the significance of

[1] *Caiaphas's View of Vicarious Sacrifice.*

[2] *The Sacrifice of Christ.*

[3] Robertson has been misled by his desire to oppose the common idea of Christ's death as a Divine punishment into unduly magnifying the natural law that brought it about, as when he speaks of the "eternal march" of universal law, which "moves on its majestic course irresistible." He forgets for the moment that the particular law in question is created by our vengeful human nature.

Christ's death by taking account of the mind of Christ as well as His outward fate, and presenting both as illustrative of the law of self-sacrifice. In the light of this law we see Christ, not simply as the victim of the world's sin, but as the willing sacrifice, offering Himself up for the redemption of men.

We may take F. W. Robertson again as representing a widely prevalent point of view. "Vicarious sacrifice is the Law of Being. It is a mysterious and fearful thing to observe how all God's universe is built upon this law, how it penetrates and pervades all nature, so that if it were to cease nature would cease to exist. Hearken to the Saviour Himself expounding these principles: 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.' We are justified therefore in assuming the law of nature to be the law of His own sacrifice, for He Himself represents it as the parallel.

"Now observe this world of God's. The mountain-rock must have its surface rusted into putrescence and become dead soil before the herb can grow. The destruction of the mineral is the life of the vegetable. Again the same process begins. The corn of wheat dies, and out of death more abundant life is born. Out of the soil in which deciduous leaves are buried, the young tree shoots vigorously, and strikes its roots deep into the realm of decay and death. Upon the life of the vegetable world the myriad forms of higher life sustain themselves—still the same law: the sacrifice of life to give life. Farther still: have we never pondered over that mystery of nature—the dove struck down by the hawk—the deer trembling beneath the stroke of the lion—the winged fish falling into the jaws of the dolphin? It is the solemn law of vicarious sacrifice again. And as often as man sees his table covered with the flesh of animals slain, does he behold, whether he think of it or not, the deep mystery and law of being. They have surrendered their innocent lives that he may live.

"Nay, farther still: it is as impossible for man to live as for man to be redeemed, except through vicarious

suffering. The anguish of the mother is the condition of the child's life. His very being has its roots in the law of sacrifice ; and from his birth onward, instinctively this becomes the law which rules his existence. There is no blessing which was ever enjoyed by man which did not come through this. There was never a country cleared for civilization, and purified in its swamps and forests, but the first settlers paid the penalty of that which their successors enjoy. There never was a victory won but the conquerors who took possession of the conquest passed over the bodies of the noblest slain, who died that they might win.

"Now observe, all this is the law obeyed either unconsciously or instinctively. But in the redemption of our humanity, a moment came when that law is recognized as the will of God, adopted *consciously*, and voluntarily obeyed as the law of man's existence. Then it is that man's true nobleness, his only possible blessedness and his redemption from blind instinct and mere selfishness, begin. . . . The highest Man recognized that law, and joyfully embraced it as the law of His existence. It was the consciousness of His surrender to that as God's will, and the voluntariness of the act, which made it sacrifice. . . . Had He been by the wiles of Caiaphas simply surprised and dragged struggling and reluctant to doom, He would have been a victim, but not a sacrifice ; He would have been an object of our compassion, but by no means of our admiring wonder. It was the foresight of all the result of His opposition to the world's sin, and His steady, uncompromising battle against it notwithstanding, in every one of its forms, knowing that He must be its victim at the last, which prevented His death from being the death of a lamb slain unconsciously on Jewish altars, and elevated it to the dignity of a true and proper sacrifice." [1]

We may question whether this law of sacrifice, as stated in its cosmical form, can greatly assist us to understand the death of Christ, in the sense of interpreting its deeper meaning. When Robertson says that Christ accepted

[1] *Caiaphas's View of Vicarious Sacrifice.*

this law of sacrifice as the very law of His being, he does not mean that Christ obeyed the same principle by which the dove is struck down by the hawk, but only that sacrifice is illustrated in both cases. That is true, but the sacrifices exemplified are of two distinct kinds; some are sacrifices of others for oneself, others are sacrifices of oneself for others; and a generalization that comprises activities so heterogeneous is of little value. The death of Christ as compassed by the Jewish leaders illustrated the one kind of sacrifice; Christ's acceptance of death in surrender to God's will, and for the good of men, illustrates the second kind.

But taking this revision as well within the lines of Robertson's real thought, and looking at Christ's death as illustrating the law of self-sacrifice, we have still to ask what light it casts upon the significance of the cross. For answer, we must turn to psychological law rather than to cosmical law. It is only when we take the law of self-sacrificing love as indicating the mind of Christ on the cross, that we read the secret of its unique value, and are enabled in some measure to see how it has achieved such wonderful results in the life of humanity. It is now widely recognized that the secret of the cross, both its meaning and its power, lie simply in the *Personality* of the sufferer; and that the circumstances of His death have their value as setting in relief the glory of His Character. Just as throughout His ministry the saving power of Christ lay in His Divine purity and charity; so His death lifts Him up before the eyes of the world as one whose purity and holiness confront unflinching the sin of man, and whose love for man is stronger than death. There God is revealed in the face of Christ, and meets man's need of forgiveness and of life. The twofold power of the cross is very frequently emphasized: its power to humble man to repentance, and its power to assure of endless forgiveness. "The passion of Christ tells the world what sin is, for it tells how a sinful world treats perfect love. It tells what love is, for it tells us what the Divine love is willing to suffer for a sinful world. The object of the Atonement is not

to enable man to escape penalty; it is to redeem him from sin."[1] Or, as another puts it: "Christ's Atonement is the reconciliation of man to God, and the method of reconciliation is revelation. He revealed man to himself, and He revealed God to man. By His sufferings He revealed man to himself. It was human bigotry and envy that crucified Him. Thus the death of Christ revealed to man the depth of sin in his own heart as it had never before been revealed. The fact that perfect goodness in His person was hated and scorned and crucified by man is an object-lesson by which the pride of man in all ages has been humbled. And again, not only in His suffering, but also in His life, He reveals God's love to man. In Him, says the beloved apostle, the life of God was manifested. In His humility and gentleness, in His lowly service, in His works of healing, in His sympathy with the sorrowful, in His friendship for the despised and degraded, He reveals to men that God whom He has taught us to call Our Father. . . . When we have studied again the life of Him who went about doing good; when we have brought again to our remembrance the truth that this lowly Servant and Sufferer was one who could say, 'I and my Father are one'; when we have witnessed again the mighty Love of One whose feet never rested on their errands of mercy, and the heroic patience of Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, dying at last a victim of their spite and conquering their enmity by enduring its deadliest assault—then we are able to put some meaning into those words and to say, 'God so loved the world'; 'Herein is Love.' And it is by this revelation that God has reconciled the world unto Himself, subduing the enmity. It is this great revelation of God's forgiveness which moves us to seek and accept His grace."[2]

Essentially the same thought is emphasized by the French theologian, AUGUSTE SABATIER, who speaks of the cross as the most powerful call to repentance humanity has ever heard, and that because it reveals the love of

[1] Cf. Lyman Abbott in *Atonement in Modern Religious Thought.*
[2] Washington Gladden, in *Atonement in Modern Religious Thought.*

God in all its power, and the sin of man in all its horror. "Love constitutes the very essence, the whole expiatory virtue, of Christ's death. Take away in thought the Love from that death, and we have in this bleeding, agonizing punishment no more expiatory virtue than in the blood of bulls or of goats. It follows from this that the physical suffering and the bloodshed have no other rôle than that of symbols, or rather vivid expressions, pathetic manifestations, of the love of Christ. The greater the suffering of Christ the more are we moved by it, because it shows us how much He has loved us. . . . But the death of Christ is also not less a condemnation of sin. The sinner sees here his soul loved by another, who gives Himself entirely for his salvation; he finds also his sin made manifest in all its murderous strength and utter culpability. He is thus in a double sense associated with the suffering of Him who is at once the Holy and the Loving One. Yet the condemnation does not consist in the amount of suffering endured by the Redeemer, but in the sense of the guilt of sin awakened in the heart of the sinner."[1]

That God's love is causeless, and the cross not a means of evoking it, but the channel of realizing it; that Christ died, not of set purpose, but simply through faithfulness to His mission; but yet that He died of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God to reveal the depth of the Divine love and to be the standing power in the world unto repentance and new obedience; that the virtue of the cross lies not in its having power with God, but in its Divine power upon man; these are truths which seem to-day to be seeking a simple, untrammelled expression. To set them forth in order, along with their presuppositions and conclusions, will be the object of the succeeding chapters.

[1] Cf. *Atonement in Modern Religious Thought*; also book on *The Atonement* in the Crown Theological Library.

(B) Essay towards Positive Construction

CHAPTER XVI

THE TASK OF POSITIVE CONSTRUCTION

THE foregoing historical survey of the doctrine of redemption was undertaken with a constructive purpose, and not simply to illustrate the remarkable difference of view on this fundamental Christian problem. Such a survey will no doubt be productive of good, if it teaches us a lesson in humility, and frees us from the dogmatic spirit which, resting on a few Scripture phrases, and a certain limited range of conception, denounces as heretical and anti-Christian all other theories than the one adopted. But the danger to-day lies rather in a different direction; and those who have freed themselves by the study of history from the dogmatism of ignorance are apt to slide into the opposite extreme of agnosticism. For when we consider the endless variety of beliefs which have in turn moulded the faith of the Christian Church, and subsist even to the present day—penal theories, governmental theories, penitential theories, mystic and realistic theories, and ethical theories of various kinds—we may be tempted to conclude that we have here a mystery which no theology can unravel, and that in fact it is of little importance which doctrine we accept, or whether we accept any doctrine at all.

This theological indecision is very prevalent to-day, not only among Christian believers, but among professed theologians. Thus Dean Farrar proclaims that the Atonement is a fact which transcends all reason, and that all theorizing is out of place. The metaphors of Scripture only "describe the Atonement in its effects as regards ourselves, not in its essence which surpasses our powers of understanding." Any attempt to explain the method

by which God has shown His transcendent compassion is "a vain endeavour to translate the language of emotion into the rigidity of syllogisms and of rapturous thanksgiving into that of rigid scholasticism."[1] Similarly Dean Church confesses his inability to comprehend either the necessity or the virtue of Christ's suffering. "I can, if I like, and as has often been done, go and make a theory how He bore our sins, and how He gained our forgiveness, and how He took away the sins of the world. But I own that, the longer I live, the more my mind recoils from such efforts."[2] Dr. Horton, too, in an *Essay on the Atonement*, distinguishes fact and theory, and ranks the method of Atonement among those Divine mysteries which men and angels desire in vain to search into. And, finally, Dr. Orr, after reviewing the various theories of Atonement, concludes that there is truth in almost all of them, that the whole truth is in none of them, and that the wisest plan is to adhere to the original statements of Scripture, which are broader and richer than any of them.[3]

But unless we are prepared to admit the bankruptcy of theology, we can scarcely take this attitude of "devout agnosticism"[4] as the final attitude on this question. We willingly admit that religion and theology are two distinct things, that men may experience salvation without having any definite theory of it, and that it is good for all of us to rise at times from our study of theological theories into the purer air of religious faith, and reverence, and aspiration. We may well believe that the Evangelists, in narrating the story of the Cross, did something better than theologize, when they told their story plainly, without intruding their own reflections. And we may agree with Prof. Bruce that, apart from any explicit theory, the story of Calvary "has spoken and continues to speak with a power far beyond that of any possible attempt at theological interpretation."

But, granting all this, we see no reason to abandon the

[1] *Atonement in Modern Religious Thought*, pp. 53–56.

[2] *Life and Letters*, p. 274.

[3] Article "Redemption" in Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

[4] As Dr. Bland, Winnipeg, neatly terms it.

search for an explicit theory of the method of Atonement. When Dean Farrar says that the Atonement is a transcendent fact and that all attempts to understand it are futile, he means, of course, not that the historical fact of Christ's death is transcendent, or that its effects in the redemption of humanity are not transparent, but simply that the relation between Christ's death and its effects is beyond our comprehension. But one may surely ask how any Christian can refer his own saving experience to the death of Christ as its original source unless he has some theory, latent or explicit, as to the connection. How can there be faith in Christ's Atonement, as the well-spring or channel of Divine blessings, unless His work and His death are clothed with some definite meaning and value? How can we even know that Christ's death is related to our salvation as cause is related to effect, unless we have some intelligible conception of the relation? Farrar suggests that Christian faith in the Atonement expresses itself in the language of emotion and rapturous feeling rather than in that of rational thought. In any case, however, Christian emotion and feeling, if worthy of the name, must be allied with some intelligible content; otherwise they will lose their distinctive character and evaporate in the void. The mere historical fact of the crucifixion will not originate a single sentiment unless it is correlated somehow to our human experience; and it will not excite any religious emotion unless we can see something of its relation to our need of redemption. It is only as comprehended in this way that any fact whatever has value for us, or touches our emotional nature.[1]

Again, it is a pure evasion to declare that in these high matters we should be content with the language of Scripture, and not attempt to be wise above what is written.

[1] "The fact that is isolated from thought, detached from any system of related facts, unexplained and unjustified, must gradually fade out of consideration and sink into neglect, leaving the bare affirmation of it, if that is still repeated, as no better than the statement of a dead dogma." (W. T. Adeney, *Atonement in Modern Religious Thought*, p. 145.) Compare also J. S. Lidgett's criticism of this modern Agnostic theology in a final Note in his work on the Atonement.

For the language of Scripture is by no means uniform; and in the very interpretation of it, and in giving to each writer his due place and significance, we are already theologizing. Scripture employs terms like sacrifice, atonement, ransom, reconciliation, propitiation,—all metaphors, as Farrar says. As metaphors, they need to be explained and interpreted to the modern mind; left unexplained or misunderstood, they are useless, may be worse than useless. The words of Scripture have no magical virtue; their vitalizing power is due to the fact that they are seeds of thought which quicken the mind and send it forth on the endless quest for truth. As to the timidity of mind which contents itself with Scripture phrases in the absence of thought, and holds to the form of sound words without caring for the matter or the meaning of them—such spiritual weakness is justly satirized by Goethe, in the advice which Mephistopheles gives to the student of theology.

MEPHIST. Im ganzen—haltet euch an Worte!
Dann geht ihr durch die sichre Pforte
Zum Tempel der Gewissheit ein.
STUDENT. Doch ein Begriff muss bei dem Worte seyn.
MEPHIST. Schon gut! Nur muss man sich nicht allzu quälen;
Denn eben wo Begriffe fehlen,
Da stellt ein Wort zur rechten Zeit sich ein.
Mit Worten lässt sich trefflich streiten,
Mit Worten ein System bereiten,
An Worte lässt sich trefflich glauben,
Von einem Wort lässt sich kein Iota rauben.[1]

Nor, again, can we be satisfied with a certain eclecticism which is much in vogue, and which, regarding all theories

[1] MEPHIST. Upon the whole I counsel thee
To stick to words as much as may be,
For such will still the surest way be
Into the Temple of certainty.
STUDENT. Yet in a word some sense must surely lurk.
MEPHIST. Yes, but one must not go too curiously to work;
For, just when our ideas fail us,
A well-coined word may best avail us.
Words are best weapons in disputing,
In system-building and uprooting;
To words most men will swear, though mean they ne'er so little;
From words one cannot filch a single tittle.

as relatively valuable, is content to point to this or that aspect of truth without attempting to reach definite conclusions. Dr. Bruce has stated the case for a tolerant comprehensiveness with great plausibility. "We should come to the study of our Lord's sufferings, prepared to find therein a many-sided revelation of Divine wisdom; not merely the righteous one suffering for righteousness' sake at the hands of the unrighteous; or the holy One suffering sympathetically with the unholy, that He may win their confidence; or a revelation of Divine love in self-sacrifice, meant to overcome the distrust with which human beings regard the Deity, and assure them of His good will; or the Son of God stooping to conquer, voluntarily humbling Himself, because that is the way to gain sovereignty over human hearts, and to obtain the highest of all dominion—that, namely, which wields sway through moral influence, not through mere physical force; or a contrivance for securing that the pardon of sin shall not be prejudicial to the interest of government and good morals; or a sacrifice to 'satisfy Divine justice'; but all these together. Why not look on the cross as a prism which analyses the light of Divine wisdom into all these coloured rays, and possibly into others whose presence we may have hitherto failed to detect?"[1]

It is interesting to notice that the same writer who recommends this comprehensive and irenical attitude towards rival theories, does not quite go the length of accepting all theories as rays of the prism of truth, and indeed shows himself to be possessed of a very robust critical faculty. Thus Dr. Bruce sets aside as a "grotesque fancy" the theory that Christ paid a ransom to the devil; and he utters the strongest denunciation of the strictly logical penal theory, presented by a modern Lutheran writer, as being "metaphysically inconceivable and morally offensive."[2]

We accept the precept of comprehensiveness, so long as we may conjoin with it the practice of criticism. It is always well to recognize that even in theories that are

[1] A. B. Bruce: *The Humiliation of Christ*, p. 324.
[2] *The Humiliation of Christ*, p. 348.

grotesque or repellent, there may be much substantial truth. And while frankly criticizing the various theories that have appeared in history, we have not denied their relative value, but rather have striven to present them in a sympathetic way, as representing the earnest endeavour of Christian men to deal worthily with a great problem. There is much truth in the Patristic and early Church theories; and in fact we are to-day returning largely to the earlier point of view. But when theologians out of exceeding reverence for the Fathers try to revive the abstract conceptions of the early ages, and personify the sin with which Christ stood in conflict, or identify the humanity of Christ with abstract "Human Nature," we cannot avoid declaring that such abstractions are no longer serviceable to thought. There is truth in the theory of a ransom from Satan, though it is only a grotesque attempt to give concreteness to the abstract theories of Greek-Christian thought. There is truth in Anselm's doctrine; and even more truth in those supplementary conceptions which he brings in casually and has not managed to incorporate in his logical system. There is much truth in the juristic penal doctrine, in so far as it replaces the older conception of God's "offended honour" by the worthier conception of God's incorruptible righteousness. There is much psychological truth in all satisfaction theories, in so far as they make a powerful appeal to the instinct of the natural conscience, which cannot directly trust God, and pictures Christ as interposing between man and the Divine disfavour or vengeance. But while we sympathize with such theories in so accommodating themselves to man's natural distrust of God, we must regard it as a radical error to consecrate such distrust, and so make permanent for faith the false pre-Christian vision of God's character. In short, we may recognize beneath the inadequate form of all these theories the underlying substance of a true faith. But it still remains the bounden duty of the theologian to extricate the truth from the cobwebs with which past theories have covered it; and thus appreciation and criticism have both their place. We have to learn from

the mistakes of the past, as well as from the positive contributions that have been made. The temple of truth is always in the making; and we can but do our part. Other men have laboured, and we may enter into their labours.

In the modern interpretation of the cross, the theological mind is adopting a distinctly historical attitude. We are no longer content to start with a few abstract thoughts, e.g., that Christ's death was voluntary, or that it was infinitely valuable because of Christ's infinite Personality; but insist on a complete view of the historical fact. We take this as the starting-point of all inquiry, and the test of all our conclusions. Even if,—as the speculative theologian reminds us—the historical facts are only the manifestation of eternal realities, we have still to start from the manifestation, and want to get as complete a view of it as possible. For there is a justifiable empiricism as well as a false. The empiricism which merely seeks to reconstruct to the mind's eye the outward historical events, and ignores their meaning, is not likely to make even an adequate descriptive reconstruction; only one who enters into the meaning of the history, and realizes something of the purposes, passions and motives of the various agents, can reach a true vision even of the outward facts. On the other hand, the reconstruction of the total fact, in its meaning and varied relations, demands not only a sympathetic understanding of what lies below the surface, but also a patient and attentive examination of the given facts, and a due respect for all details of the outward situation.

But while we desire to give all due attention to the concrete history, the very fact that we seek to discover its religious significance must inevitably carry us into the metaphysical or super-historical realm, as well as into the psychological realm of our moral and spiritual experience. Our conceptions in these realms will largely determine and colour our theory of redemption. We may treat some of these as preconceptions, though in point of fact they may have owed their special form to the very facts with which we have to deal; but in any case the root-ideas

come from the wider experience of life. These root-conceptions, bearing on the Atonement, are such as relate to God, sin, the moral order, and man's need of regeneration and forgiveness. Accordingly we shall start with some of these wider conceptions, and thereafter proceed to show how they find their centre and focus in the redeeming work of Christ.

CHAPTER XVII

PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE ATONEMENT

(A) The Doctrine of God

God is the Infinite Personality, the ground and goal of all finite beings, whose will is directed to the highest ends and whose goodness underlies the sin and sorrow of the world. The faith in such a being may be justified not only by reference to the progressive movement of the world's religious thought, but by rational considerations drawn from experience—considerations which have made it impossible for the philosopher to satisfy himself with any inferior conception of the ultimate reality. While we may assume this faith as the *sine qua non* of any problem of redemption, we may briefly notice the present incoherency and discord that prevail in regard to this vital truth.

Since the time of Kant it has been customary to divorce the theoretical intellect from the moral and religious experience, and to set the God of philosophy in opposition to the God of religion. The metaphysician has accepted the separation, and looking down from the calm heights of philosophy has criticized the common religious faith as tainted with a crude anthropomorphism. While retaining the thought of the Infinite and Absolute Reason, he has been inclined to regard the personality of God as a limiting anthropomorphic imagination; and accordingly he has either frankly rejected such a conception or given it a "symbolic" value. On the other hand, the religious man—or rather the theologian who claims to be his spokesman—defies philosophy and stands by the personality of God. He even plays with the idea of a finite God

as being more in harmony with his religious experience; or at any rate, he advances the suggestion that the Divine Infinite Being must have made Himself finite, or be eternally self-limiting, that there may be scope for a world of natural forces and of human freedom.

This divorce between faith and reason is, we believe, only temporary, and must give place to a conception of God in which the claims of reason and faith will be harmonized. It seems evident enough that the quarrel has brought satisfaction to neither extreme. Whatever difficulties remain unsolved in the doctrine of God as the Infinite Personal spirit, they are as a drop in the bucket when compared with those that arise when we contemplate the vagaries offered in its place. Infinite reason without a personal centre is pure abstraction, an outworn relic of Platonic realism. On the other hand, a "finite" God implies that some other principle must be postulated for the ultimate explanation of reality; and those who argue in favour of such a God seem scarcely able to persuade themselves of His existence.[1] While again, the conception of a God who has limited Himself from all eternity will strike the ordinary mind as a sheer contradiction in terms. Such extreme and impossible theories seem to rest on an erroneous conception of the relation of the infinite to the finite. The general assumption seems to be that the Infinite Being, conceived as the All-being, must sublate and destroy all finite self-reality and freedom. But the infinite and the finite, instead of being exclusive conceptions, may be viewed as mutual implicates. Infinite space includes all finite spaces: both transcends them and is immanent in them. Infinite time, or eternity, transcends all finite times, yet is immanent in all times. So the infinitude of the Divine Personality transcends all finite existences, all human personalities, and is nevertheless immanent in all.

Passing now to the special question as to God's moral nature and His moral relations to the world, we must

[1] Cff. M'Taggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*; and Mill, *Essays on Religion*.

seek to define more clearly what is involved in a perfect ethical personality. Here we place ourselves frankly within the sphere of those ethical ideals which are the product of Christianity, and conceive God as the Loving Will which has for its supreme world-goal the moral harmony between God and man and between man and man —in other words, the realization of the Kingdom of God.

The question of the ethical ideal, which was formerly debated by intuitionists and utilitarians, is now being settled from a teleological point of view, which corrects the one-sidedness of the traditional rival theories. Utilitarianism was justified in opposing the subjectivism of the usual perfection-theory, and insisting that the goal of moral life be stated in objective terms; it is erroneous in its contention that the goal of life is pleasure. It is transcended by the higher Utilitarianism which relates moral activity to the ends secured by it, but measures action by the standard of the moral perfecting of society. The older Intuitionist ethics was right in denying that action must be measured by its pleasurable or painful consequences; but it went to the opposite extreme when it maintained that moral action had no reference to the ends to be secured by it. For the supreme ideal of morality is no abstract state of individual virtue, any more than it is the attainment of pleasure; it is the realization in life of life's highest ends, and all activity must be judged by its ability to secure these ends. Instead, however, of characterizing this objective end as self-realization, i.e., the realization of what is rational and universal in man, it seems better to use language less liable to misinterpretation, and to define the end of moral activity as being the realization of a Divine Kingdom in which all the special ends of human life have their due place.

If, then, we take the Kingdom of God to be the true goal of all moral endeavour, we must conceive of God in the same light, and think of His activity in time as dedicated to the same high goal. The fact that God is the supreme or Infinite Personality cannot affect this conception of His character. We cannot conceive of Him

as being "ex lex,"—above the law because He is the author of it; or as being actuated by other principles and seeking other ends in His capacity of moral governor. It is true that change of position implies corresponding change of duties—that one who is appointed as judge by the state cannot act in the same way as a private person, and that criminal law must vary from private individual conduct. Hence it seems a specious argument to insist that God, as the moral governor and judge of human action, is not subject to the same moral laws as are appropriate in private relations. But, while conduct must vary, moral right and wrong do not vary. We have yet to discover any proof that the principles which ought to govern public law or criminal procedure are essentially different from those which ought to rule among men in their private capacity. While the application of the ideal may vary, judge, legislator, and private person alike are subject to the same principle of conduct; each in his own place and position must strive to further the highest ends of the community.

But further, we judge of moral action, not only in reference to the end which it serves, but in respect of the moral character which it manifests; and in the perfect ideal these will entirely correspond. The various human virtues and graces of character are like the individual stones which go to construct the temple of the ideal, and which vary in size and proportions according to position. And just as in relation to human life we express the excellences of character variously, so we naturally distinguish the various aspects of God's character as wisdom, holiness, justice, faithfulness and love. In imperfect human character these virtues often appear as separated from one another, and in partial and one-sided fashion; but in God they are perfectly harmonious, and form one substantial moral excellence, varying only in aspect according to the circumstances and relations in which it reveals itself.

It does not follow, however, that all the names which we assign to the various aspects of character are of co-ordinate value. Plato already taught that the three

great virtues of wisdom, courage, and temperance were but particular aspects of Justice,—by which he understood the harmony of the soul, or the harmonious working of citizens in the state. Justice in the ruler would take the form of wisdom, in the workers and common people it would reveal itself as temperance, in the warriors as courage; but these were but the applications of the fundamental virtue of Justice to the special situations in which men were placed. And similarly the Christian world, with its loftier ideal of the universal Kingdom of God, and its higher view of the ideal relations between men, has from the first carried with it the higher teaching that all virtues are gathered into one in the single, all-inclusive virtue of Love. By love is here meant not merely "an ardent, passionate and devoted state of mind"[1]; it is not mere feeling, but rather the state of feeling conjoined with the will that aims at the establishing of God's Kingdom in human lives. As such, Christian love is the sovereign excellence which, when once recognized, takes its place as the soul and permanent ground of all the other virtues.

This central position of Love has not yet been adequately recognized, even in Christian ethics. In spite of the fact that the Gospel of Christ plainly declares love to be the all-inspiring and all-embracing motive and principle of right conduct—in spite of Paul's pæan to love as the root of all other excellence, and deeper even than hope or faith—in spite of the occasional gleams of vision revealed in the highest Christian thought—the Christian world has practically continued to regard love as one of the virtues, or as the effluence of moral character, rather than as the essence of character and the soul of virtue. Augustine had a glimpse of the truth, and made a brave attempt to incorporate all the virtues into one, and to construe them as so many phases of Christian love;[2]

[1] Cf. Seeley: *Ecce Homo*, p. 137.

[2] Cf. *De moribus ecclesiæ*, ch. xv. "Temperantia amor integrum se præbens ei quod amatur; Fortitudo amor facile tolerans omnia quod amat; Justitia amor soli *amato* serviens et propterea recte dominans; Prudentia amor ea, quibus adjuvatur, ab eis, quibus impeditur, sagaciter seligens."

but he was too much imbued with formalistic ethics to hold to this position, and in fact his doctrinal theology of predestination quite precluded him from applying any single conception to God's moral relations with the world. Later theology has almost entirely ignored the attempt of Augustine to unify the virtues, and while conceding that love is the *sine qua non* of a high type of moral living, has generally treated it as a mere feeling, and so relegated it to a minor place. But if we take this quality of mind in its full Christian sense—as shadowed forth in anticipatory fashion in the mutual affection and devotion of family life, broadening out into social service, and coming to completion in devotion to the service of God's Kingdom, love is the all-inclusive virtue of human life, the root and guiding principle of all moral law.

If love is thus the root of the highest human character, we must assume it to be also the supreme principle of the Divine character. The essence of God's moral character must be seen in the loving will which seeks the good of spiritual beings, and realizes on earth the kingdom of love and brotherhood. God is Love, and all His relations to men must be controlled by this supreme attitude.

Hence the frequent attempt to distinguish in God's character between essential or absolute attributes—e.g., holiness, justice, purity—and relative or optional attributes, such as benevolence, love, mercy, must be regarded as fallacious. Such a cleavage has a certain plausible foundation in the distinction we make in human morals between the ordinary requirement of duty and the higher requirement of the Christian ideal. We expect all men to be just ; we do not demand of the average man that he shall exercise forbearance, kindness or mercy. We say a man must be just, but he may or may not be generous. Morality is a growth, and we do not expect of men at the average stage what we expect of those who have high Christian ideals. But this distinction is clearly inapplicable to God, in whom the moral idea is perfected.

In truth, to apply such distinctions to God is neither philosophical nor Christian. It is not philosophical. The Absolute is not the mere unrelated, but what is

perfect in all relations; and hence God's justice is as relative as His mercy and love. And again, we cannot admit that there is anything relative in God in the sense of being accidental or arbitrary. All God's volitions must be conceived as expressive of His permanent character. There is no variableness with God; He is essentially perfect, and therefore unchangeable in the pursuance of His all-perfect end. Nor, further, can such a distinction be made acceptable to the Christian mind. For love is the highest moral excellence in man, and it is impossible to conceive anything higher or more essential in the character of God. If love is not the supreme attribute of God, we have little reason to regard Jesus as the revelation of God. The truth of the Divine Fatherhood shines through all the Saviour's words and actions. No doubt the Fatherhood of God must be conceived in the light of the highest type of human fatherhood, and therefore as pure, just, and holy; but the thought of Fatherhood remains as the regulating and all-comprehending idea, and thus God's justice and hatred of sin must be understood by relation to His eternal purpose of love towards mankind. To conceive of God's justice as standing outside His Fatherhood is the old Gnostic heresy with which the early Christian Church had to contend in the early centuries; and it is no less a heresy when presented to-day in the name of orthodox faith.

CHAPTER XVIII

PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE ATONEMENT

(B) Sin and God's Moral Order

Viewing man as a moral being, capable of fulfilling a moral ideal or of failing therein, one may distinguish three stages in his moral consciousness—those of nature, of conscience, and of religious conviction.

In the earliest stage man is largely the child of nature, and follows instinctively his natural impulses without any reflection on the moral meaning of life. The life of the animal is the best analogue of this stage of human experience. Just as the animal instinctively acts according to its nature when it rends its prey or defends its young, so human life follows at first the natural instincts in the direction of pleasure or self-preservation; and we should no more think of expressing moral judgment on such activities than of moralizing on the goodness of the sunshine or the wickedness of an avalanche. Till conscience awakes, with reflection on the good and evil of conduct, man is still on the level of nature, and moral judgment is out of place. "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual." No doubt human life has latent within it from the beginning what is more than nature; but so long as the spiritual factor is latent, and life is lived on the plane of animal or natural instinct and impulse, we are entitled to speak of this as the non-moral stage, or the stage of innocence.

A new and distinctively moral stage appears with the unfolding of the latent spirituality and the awakening of conscience. By gradual processes in which training unites with the growing self-consciousness, the child learns

to discriminate between good and evil and to judge of his own conduct by a moral standard. He discovers that many of his activities are no longer innocent, but rest under a condemnation of selfishness or injustice. The harmony of early innocence is thus broken, and the conflict between good and evil begins. He is now living on the moral plane, and while some of his activities continue to be merely natural, and do not come under the survey of conscience, what we now call his moral activities take their character, and are judged by himself, according as they obey or defy the ideal which conscience presents. If he masters a natural impulse in pursuance of a higher ideal of good, he approves himself; if he yields to passion or impulse in despite of the known higher good, he condemns himself, and is condemned by others, as a wrong-doer.

But wrong-doing is not yet sin in the full and proper sense of that term. There is a further stage of the deepening conscience when man realizes that the universal will which utters itself in his conscience is one with the will of God. It might be held that all wrong-doing is sin, and that it is only the recognition of it as sin that marks this stage of moral consciousness. But just as the recognition of wrong-doing as such is necessary to make an act morally condemnable, so the very recognition of our evil conduct as sin against God deepens the actual unworthiness of all future misconduct no less than the sense of its unworthiness. This is the truth underlying the contention of Anselm and others that sin as dishonour done to God has infinite unworthiness. Viewed merely as wrong-doing, as injury to this or that person, it appears as a finite deed with finite effects; but when done in conscious opposition to the will of Heaven by one who knows that the moral law is also a Divine commandment, it is obviously of more serious import. It is thus that we can appreciate the cry of the Psalmist when, looking at his wrong-doing in the light of God's goodness, he exclaims: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."

Accordingly, when we characterize wrong-doing generally from the religious standpoint as sin against God, we

must at least recognize the different levels of the moral standard. So long as conscience is little developed, the wrong-doing must be judged with greater leniency; and similarly, so long as the consciousness of God is latent or undeveloped, we must judge with corresponding leniency. The old theology which regarded all wrong-doing as equally sin against God, and therefore equally hell-deserving, and only made a belated concession to the facts of experience by acknowledging that some sins are more heinous than others, must be replaced by a theology which, without minimizing the evil of wrong-doing, will measure its moral judgment of it by a more careful psychology.

In the first place we must measure human sin by the stage and degree of moral enlightenment, and by the moral possibilities of the environment. The moral ideals are gradually changing; and as we never charge ourselves with failure to follow an ideal we do not know, so we cannot condemn the savage because he has only the ideals of his tribe and acts in accordance with them. And further, the plane of the individual's moral possibilities is largely determined by his nature and immediate social environment. Here the facts of social solidarity must be taken into account—the power of inherited physical characteristics, possibly also of inherited moral tendency, not to speak of the influence of the social atmosphere in all its forms; all these influences help to constitute the spiritual moulds within which the moral life will necessarily run, and to determine the limit of the individual progress. The essential morality of the individual depends on the way in which he reacts upon these inward or outward factors. It remains true, however, that neither nature nor society creates the moral individual. However close we draw the limits of moral possibility, we must always postulate an inner sphere in which the individual is not creature, but creator; for only so can we regard him as responsible for his conduct. To abandon this conception of a living moral personality, able to react on all the moulding circumstances of inherited nature, training and environment, and within certain limits to remould them for good or evil, is simply to cut

away the ground of all moral judgment, and to undermine the moral conceptions of mankind. The recognition of this inner spring of personality is not necessarily a return to the older individualism, which failed to recognize the growing stability of character and also the limits created by social environment. It simply expresses the sane individualism which places responsibility on each man for the use he makes of his relative freedom.

And secondly, in judging of individual character within these limiting conditions, we are compelled by experience to admit the infinite variety in degree of moral worthiness and unworthiness. This is true, not merely of society, but of the individual. Not only are there good and bad men in all ages and countries, but there is some degree of goodness and badness in each individual. The saintliest of men have their weaknesses, and the vilest of men have their excellences. Richard Baxter is reported to have said in his old age: "I now see that good men are not as good as I once thought they were, and that few men are so bad as their enemies imagine." Good and evil among all men in the Christian world; have we any reason to deny that the same holds good of the heathen world, and of all ages? In all men there are possibilities of good which show themselves occasionally in conduct; and in all there are possibilities of evil which come sometimes to light. We are thus entitled to recognize, along with the fact of the universality of sin, the correlative fact of the universality of goodness. No man perfectly attains the ideal, even the ideal of his own time and age; and yet—no man absolutely fails.

> Of absolute and irretrievable
> And all-subduing black—black's soul of black,
> Beyond white's power to disintensify,
> Of that I saw no sample.

Nations rise in the moral scale, and again they seem to fall beneath their former level; but on the whole we may believe there is progress, both in moral enlightenment and in the moral practice which follows. We see the same in the Christian community. Some men are good with a goodness never before attained; others, resisting the

influence of the Spirit, may sink to lower depths. The possibilities of good and evil are increased; the Christian is assured of triumphant, if gradual, progress, while the man who resists the Spirit of Christ sins against clearer light, and his sin takes on a darker hue.

We cannot but ask, why is there always this relative failure to attain the perfection that is possible? That there should be only a gradual advance towards the ideal, in proportion as it emerges clearly into the light of human consciousness, needs no further explanation; but why do men lag behind their own ideal, and sometimes openly defy it and fall to the abysses of selfishness, cruelty or sensuality?

We may set aside those solutions of this problem which postulate some pre-temporal existence, or some timeless act of will, in which the individual soul fell away from God and his reverence for the moral ideal.[1] Not only is such a daring hypothesis quite unverifiable, but it is no solution of the problem, for it only sets it back a step. Nor, again, is the Augustinian view more acceptable that the fall of the first man involved all his descendants in corruption, so that they "cannot but sin." Apart from the exaggerations contained in this doctrine, the mystical subsumption of all men in Adam is no intelligible explanation; while the simpler doctrine that Adam's sinfulness passed by heredity to his descendants confuses all moral conceptions by ignoring the essential distinction between nature and character.

The best explanation of the prevalence of moral evil is that found in the psychology of actual moral experience, and in the contrast between man's natural and spiritual life. Man is a child of nature; and, as already said, it is his natural side that is first developed. Long before his spiritual life awakes, he is habituated to conduct suggested by natural instincts and pursued without reflection. Hence the difficulty of pursuing a higher ideal when it comes to be recognized. We have only to follow the path of least resistance and ignore the higher requirement, and the downward moral path is already begun. Vice is easy, virtue is hard. It is easy to let the ideal go; it takes an

[1] Cf. the modified Platonic doctrines of Origen, Kant and Julius Müller.

effort, and we must bestir ourselves to pursue it. Even when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. The pull of the primary instincts and inclinations is stronger than the attraction of the awakening spiritual ideal, because the former have been first in the field and have entrenched themselves in our thoughts and habits. What wonder if the spiritual life should be severely handicapped from the outset? If we add to this the fact that conscience awakens gradually and is beset more or less with ignorance and hesitation, and also the fact of the evil environment, discouraging to all high endeavour, may we not say that the universality of moral failure has been fairly solved?

We have next to deal with the consequences of sin, and the penalties that fall upon it, whether these be natural, human, or Divine.

It is part of the moral ideal that right-doing should be encouraged and that wrong-doing should be challenged, punished, or in other ways discouraged; and accordingly we approve of the general law that appears in the very constitution of things whereby sin and suffering go together. In the case of physical sins this law is most obviously recognizable. Intemperance brings bodily derangement and weakness in its train; and the various kinds of vicious indulgence are followed by disorder of nerves and waste of vital energy. Similar natural consequences follow on the sins which a man commits against society. No sooner are selfishness, pride or cruelty revealed in actions injurious to society, than reactions set in, with evil social consequences to the evil-doer. When a man sins against his neighbours, he is alienated from their sympathy, and the evils he has done return on himself in innumerable ways. As love begets love, and kindness a responsive kindness, so selfishness begets selfishness, and pride brings about alienation of affection; every man reaps socially what he sows. He who refuses help to others is apt to receive little in his own hour of need; judging others harshly, he is himself judged likewise; with what measure he metes it is meted to him again. The same law is seen in those positive social

reactions which come upon the wrong-doer when society assumes an organized form. Society imposes special penalties on crimes committed against it. In the early stages of society these penalties operated like nature; for as nature penalizes the act without concerning itself about motive, and allows the consequences to spread far beyond the culprit himself, so the primitive society endeavoured to fit the punishment to the external criminal act without considering the degree of culpability involved, and had no compunctions about penalizing the culprit's household and kin.

Besides these penalties of nature and social custom or enactment, morality received additional enforcement in the penalties of the Divine government; and it was the prevalent view that the whole circumstance and environment of life were used by the Divine power to supplement the deficiencies of nature and of human law. Sin being conceived as external wrong-doing deserving of external penalty, the imagination could extend itself freely over all the ills of life, and discover in some, or in all of them, the deserved equivalent of suffering. The judgment of Heaven was seen, not so much in the natural consequences of the sin, or in the human penalties imposed, as in special evils expressly sent for the punishment of the evil-doer. While these Divine punishments were viewed as more accurate and unerring than others, they were naturally conceived on the same lines as the penalty of human justice. As human justice dealt with individual actions, so God was supposed to visit specific penalties on specific sins. As human justice sought to mete out evil to the culprit in due proportion to the evil done—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth—so God's judgment was supposed to be strikingly manifested when he who had dug a pit for his neighbour fell into the pit he had made. The Jewish rabbins were particularly fond of pointing out such correspondences in the history of Israel, and also of discovering the specific single acts which had led to specific evils.[1] And finally, just as human justice was

[1] For example: Samson sinned through the lust of the eyes, and so Providence ordained that his eyes should be put out by the Philistines;

satisfied when the culprit's punishment fell also on his family or his tribe, so the Divine justice was thought to be completely vindicated when it visited the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

These represent the earlier conceptions of the connection of sin and punishment, as seen in the thought and practice of Israel, or of other nations which have risen to the moral conception of God. But the growth of the moral consciousness inevitably brings with it new interpretations of the facts of life and new conceptions of the nature of penalty. In the first place, sin cannot be regarded merely as an external act, which may be judged apart from consideration of the inward will and character. Human justice may scarcely find it possible to deal with more than the individual acts, and can take little account of the complexity and niceties of motive; but it comes to be recognized that God looks upon the heart, and that his judgment will measure conduct by the inner intention and the character it reveals. In the light of this larger principle the moral atomism of the rabbins, which searched for specific sins to account for particular external evils, is quite transcended; and their endeavour to discover an equation or identity between the outward character of the sinful deed and the character of the punishment, becomes little better than a curious absurdity. Further, it soon becomes obvious to a reflective mind that a justice which confounds the innocent with the guilty—involving the innocent children in the punishment of the guilty parent—is quite unworthy of the name of justice. We can trace the transition to this higher point of view in the Old Testament; as in the plea of Abraham that the righteous persons in Sodom should not be implicated in the sin of the city, or in the prayer of David during the plague: "Lo, I have sinned, and done perversely, but these sheep, what have they done?" and more generally in the teaching of the pre-exilic prophets,

Absalom sinned by glorying in his hair, and it was by his long tresses that he was done to death. If a man died suddenly, the rabbins questioned whether he had broken some vow or neglected the study of the law; if a farmer lost his cattle, they wondered if he had neglected the observance of the Sabbath day.

who strenuously deny that God's justice ever permits the innocent to suffer with the guilty. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."[1] But if Divine justice thus takes account of the individual personality, we have still to face the question why the innocent do in point of fact often suffer in consequence of the sins of others; and if justice does not explain it, some other interpretation must be sought.

This second stage of thought, which insists on unerring and individual retributive justice, is generally accompanied by a more careful estimate of the facts of experience. It is broadly recognized that God's retribution is not exactly carried out in external circumstances. One cannot easily discover a moral order in the sense of an equation between moral conduct and external fortune; but it is still held to be discoverable in the moral and spiritual results of conduct. The inexorable retributions of justice are now seen, not in any outward equivalence of lot and conduct, but in the spiritual blessedness or misery which results. Thus J. Caird affirms that the main penalty of sin is not to be found in any outward inflictions, but in the inward evils which rise out of it. "There is a penalty for sin which is not arbitrary, which follows it by a law as irreversible as that of physical causation—the penalty which consists of such things as the stings of conscience, the darkening of the moral perceptions, the extinction of the light of purity in the soul, the hateful bondage of evil passion, the bitterness of remorse, the shrinking from hateful memories of the past, the vague forebodings of the unknown future."[2]

The relative value of this view of penalty and God's moral order may be acknowledged; it reveals a higher standpoint than the older view of providence. That each man should suffer for his own sin; that the motives of conduct must be considered in a true moral judgment

[1] Ezek. xviii. 20; Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.
[2] *Fundamental Ideas*, Vol. II, p. 214.

of conduct ; that the moral order is to be found, not so much in the equation of character and fortune, but rather in the consequent spiritual blessedness or misery ; these positions represent a higher attitude than the older faith, which took little account of the individual personality, and sought to discover a strict moral order in the apportionment of the external goods of life. But this advanced stage of conception still remains within the limits of the nomistic-religious standpoint ; the principle is still upheld that so much goodness must be followed by so much happiness or blessedness, and so much sin by so much penalty. In other words, God's moral providence is still conceived from the point of view of a strict retributive justice which balances goodness with blessedness and wickedness with its equivalent misery. We may prepare the way for a truer conception of the moral order by pointing out the inadequacy of this scheme of thought in three respects. It is based on a formalistic ethic which is gradually being abandoned ; it does not harmonize with the facts of experience ; and it is nconsistent with the Christian conception of God, and of His purpose for mankind.

In the first place, the standpoint of a strict retributive order in the world has its place in a formalistic theory of ethics, according to which conduct is judged by its formal character of obedience to law without reference to its purpose and meaning. But it is now coming to be recognized that moral laws serve social ends of good, and that their authority rests on the ends they serve. The right of punishment must also be teleologically conceived by reference to its value for the good of society.[1] While it is

[1] Cf. James Seth : *Ethical Principles*, p. 304. "From the point of view of the individual, punishment is the forfeiture, temporary or permanent, of his rights as a citizen or of his civil liberty. This forfeiture is warranted only in so far as it is necessary in the interest of the common good which the individual has injured ; since he has violated the conditions of social well-being, he is responsible for his own punishment as the new condition of that well-being, which includes his own. Its social justice lies in its social necessity ; the measure in which it exceeds that necessity is the measure of its injustice." In other words, while the desert of punishment is measured by the individual's wrong-doing, the justice of the punishment actually meted out is measured by its necessity and value for society and for the individual as a member of society.

still very generally assumed that the desert of punishment rests on the criminal's own act, which as a violation of the rights of others justifies a penal forfeiture of rights, the character and amount of the actual punishment inflicted must be determined by its social effects—i.e., by its preventative, deterrent, or reformative value. The ethical question agitated to-day, as to whether punishment involves any element of retribution or retaliation, or whether it is not entirely disciplinary in character, indicates the transition that is being made from the formal to the teleological point of view. It is certain that criminal law is no longer content with punishment as such, but is beginning to modify the character of penalty with a view to the reformation of the criminal. The changes which are thus being made in ethical conception and in criminal procedure cannot but lead to a revision of our conception of the moral order; for the moral Government of the universe must be conceived on the analogy of human government.

Secondly, the nomistic-religious conception of a strictly retributive moral order accords very ill with the facts of common experience. That wrong-doing is in various ways challenged and penalized, and that there is a disciplinary system of some kind at work, no one will question; but to identify this with an order by which righteousness and wickedness are exactly compensated in terms of happiness or suffering, is to shut one's eyes to the facts of life. If we believe in a strict retribution as God's way of dealing with sin, the problems of suffering rise on all hands to the endangering of our faith in God's justice.

But we may take still higher ground. The one-sidedness of a merely retributive view of God's moral order becomes even more manifest when we test it in the light of the Christian conception of God. It is nomistic religion, not Christianity, which pictures God as working by methods of strict retribution. The Christian God is one whose aim is the realization of His kingdom among men; and the laws of His working must be conceived as the expression of His character and as designed to forward His gracious ends. His impartial righteousness blends with the gracious purpose of His will, and cannot be considered

otherwise than as a means of realizing it. When God is thus conceived as the Father, even of the lost and wandering children of humanity, our view of the penalties of wrong-doing must be revised accordingly. We may still speak of just retribution, but no longer of mere retribution; for the merely punitive aspect is transcended in the higher conception of correction and discipline.

One of the most instructive passages in Calvin's writings is that in which he tries to uphold the conception of two kinds of moral order—one for the generality of mankind and another for the Christian believer—one, an order of retributive vengeance and the other an order of fatherly discipline. God has two ways of judging men, he says. "For the sake of distinction we may call the one kind of judgment judicial vengeance (*judicium vindictæ*), the other a judgment of chastisement (*judicium castigationis*). In the judgment of vengeance God is to be understood as avenging Himself on His adversaries by displaying His anger against them, confounding, scattering and annihilating them. By Divine vengeance, properly so called, let us therefore understand punishment accompanied with indignation. In the judgment of chastisement He is offended, but not in wrath; He does not take vengeance so as to destroy, or blast as with a thunderbolt. Hence it is not punishment or vengeance, properly speaking, but correction and admonition. The one is the act of a judge, the other that of a father. For when the judge punishes a criminal, he fixes attention on the offence itself, and demands that the evil deed itself be punished. When the father corrects his son sharply, it is not to mulct and take vengeance, but rather to teach him and make him more careful in future." He goes on to show that the retributive judgment carries God's wrath and curse with it, whereas that of chastisement is an evidence of love and carries blessing with it; and further, that those who are chastised are beaten, not that they may pay the punishment due, but to the end that they may repent, whereas those upon whom retributive justice is done "are not punished with a view to bring them back to a better mind, but simply to teach them by dire experience that God is a

judge and an avenger." [1] Calvin illustrates the two kinds of judgment by taking the rejection of king Saul as an instance of Divine retribution, and the punishment of David in the loss of his child (after his deadly sin), as an instance of chastisement. We may illustrate in a similar way by pointing out that on this view, when a man gets drunk and has a violent headache in consequence, the headache is a gracious chastisement if he happens to be a Christian ; but if he is a heathen or an unbeliever, it is a punishment of retribution, and a foretaste of eternal vengeance.

This distinction between vengeance and chastisement, or between a retributive and a disciplinary moral order, has been drawn with all the logic of Calvin's mind. It is naturally deducible from Calvin's dual conception of God's character and purpose for the world ; and it is as strongly objectionable as are these presuppositions. It is true there is some basis for the distinction in the ordinary interpretation of experience. The Christian does regard the consequences of his wrong-doing as God's chastisement, and is thus led to bow before them and to reform his ways ; while the hardened evil-doer, if he deigns to consider God at all, naturally regards God as his enemy, and the punishment that befalls him as God's vengeance. But does it follow that the two points of view are equally justified ? If God has a gracious purpose in the one case, why not also in the other, where the issues are precisely identical ? Has not the Christian reached the higher and truer point of view, because he has a truer conception of God and a fuller insight into His ways ? If God is the universal Father, with a gracious purpose for the world, the distinction falls at once to the ground ; and we must believe that all God's punishments have an end of good for mankind,—are the punishments of a Father, arresting, disciplinary, and remedial in their final purpose. This conception of God's moral order in no way infringes on the reality of God's wrath against sin, or on the severity of His punishments. But it does imply that we take the thought of God's Fatherhood as central in interpreting His moral

[1] *Institutes*, Bk. III, chap. iv, pars. 31, 33.

relations with the world. If we are able to interpret all God's present working in this light, why should we be hindered from such interpretation by an old dualistic conception of God, which has come down to us from the traditions of earlier nomistic faiths? The physical evil results of wrong-doing do not follow on any lines of strict retribution; but they may be directly regarded as part of a gracious moral order, natural and stated ways of admonition, to show us the evil of our conduct and so to correct and reform. The moral or inward consequences of sin are more than retributive punishments; they are arranged and designed with a view to the discipline and moral training of the individual. The miseries caused by the consciousness of sin, the sense of moral degradation, the feeling of estrangement from God, are means to arrest the sinner and bring him to a knowledge of himself. In short, all the evils of life may be taken as furthering the gracious will of Providence; and if of the nature of punishment, they may well be regarded in the light of correction and chastisement—to bring sinful men to bethink themselves, to "humble them and to prove them, and to do them good at their latter end."

What, then, is the moral order of the world? Under a nomistic scheme of thought, it implies that every man has rendered to him according to his works in definite quantity of pleasure or of pain—that there is a strict equivalence between happiness and goodness, between pain and wrong-doing. Under the higher, the Christian point of view, it means rather that a real disciplinary order prevails: that the life of the righteous is a blessed, triumphant life, whatever be his outward estate or fortune, and that wickedness involves isolation, inward discord or spiritual death. The good man is in harmony with the universal purpose, and may hope that he shall yet "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied": the bad man is at odds with the world and its Divinely-ordered end, and spiritual failure is his doom. That is the true Moral Order—consistent both with our experience, and with our faith in One who makes all things work together for good to them that love Him.

CHAPTER XIX

THE REDEMPTIVE LIFE OF CHRIST

As we now proceed to consider the redemptive work of Christ, we may pause for a moment to recall the main aspects of religious thought preceding the advent of Christianity. While we may characterize Christianity as the Redemptive religion, thus distinguishing it from preceding nature-religions and from nomistic-moral religions, the very continuity of religious development would entitle us to look for some elements of redemptive significance even in these lower forms of religion. As Eucken points out, all religions are more or less marked by a negation and an affirmation—a negation of the world of our direct experience, and an affirmation of some higher order of things and of the blessedness secured by those who enter that higher order. Religion has its birth in dissatisfaction with present conditions and in desire for a truer, fuller life. But as the needs and ideals of men vary in content according to the stage of spiritual intelligence and moral culture, and gradually advance from the natural to the spiritual realm, so the conception of what constitutes redemption comes to be deepened and enlarged.

Thus in the earlier religions of nature, it is the need that arises from external evils that receives main consideration; and the favour of the Deity is seen in those natural deliverances which occur in the crises of tribal or national life. But as natural religion passes into moral religion, a higher experience of redemption becomes possible. If salvation is still construed in terms of outward national prosperity, the need of moral harmony with the righteous will of God comes also into the foreground. Outward

prosperity is the reward of righteousness, as evil is the sign of Heaven's wrath against moral iniquity; but righteousness is not merely valued as a means of obtaining the reward, it is also valued for itself, as a seal of fellowship with the God of righteousness. In the main, however, moral religion assumes a nomistic type of thought, in which God is conceived as governing men by a system of rewards and punishments. The deeper needs of a spiritual redemption are not yet realized; it is generally assumed that man can by his righteousness deserve the favour of God, and that if he has fallen into sin and come under the wrath of a righteous Heaven, he can readily regain his lost position by repentance and new obedience.

The limitations of this type of religious thought come into view with the deepening of the moral-religious ideal. So long as the law of God is conceived as a number of definite and limited commandments or prohibitions, the difficulty of realizing it will not be greatly felt; and men can easily be divided into righteous people who fear God and fulfil His law, and those who stand aloof from God and neglect the commandments. Nor does it seem unreasonable to think that repentance is well within human power, and that reflection on the evil consequences of sin and dread of God's wrath may suffice to lead men through repentance to a renewed state of righteousness. But as the conception of God's moral requirement deepens, and its infinitude is revealed, men begin to have humbler conceptions of their own power, and find a new urgency in the problem: How shall a man be just before God? It seems now less easy to work out a righteousness of our own; in the light of infinite purity the obedience, or repentance unto obedience, which once seemed within our reach, proves to be an unrealizable requirement. The more clearly the infinitude of the law is recognized, the more hopeless becomes the effort to rise to the ideal standard. The past sin is a burden that weighs the sinner down, and it seems a sheer impossibility to bring purity out of the poisoned springs of life. Who shall bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?

And once reflection has awakened this deeper sense of sin and sin's bondage, experience shows that no mere nomistic-moral religion has power to uplift the soul. The motives to repentance which have their place in a moral faith are quite inadequate to meet the deeper need. The sanctions of reward and punishment on which stress is laid are only, at best, motives of interest and fear, and cannot of themselves work any genuine moral betterment. Just as a forced obedience is no real obedience, so the morality that is actuated by fear or self-interest is only external, and leads to a slavish sort of service. And the same moral deficiency affects the soul's attitude to God. Viewed merely as moral governor, God is feared, but not loved; true fellowship is chilled or curtailed. It is only because higher motives and further anticipations of truth spring up under this nomistic faith that the religious mind can reach the attitude of true fellowship and of a love that transcends fear.

The spiritual deficiency of "the Law" was recognized by the higher minds of Israel. While the prophets denounce the sins of Israel and threaten Heaven's retribution, in order that they may bring the nation to repentance, they almost invariably recognize that all such enforcements of obedience are unavailing. They realize that, with all their efforts to save a nation advancing to its ruin, they are but voices crying in the wilderness; and that no redemption is possible on the old lines. And, rising above their nomistic faith, they look forward to some redeeming work of God in the distant future, when Israel's heart would be renewed, and what the law with all its terrible sanctions could not accomplish would be secured by the outpouring of God's spirit. This faith in the Messianic Kingdom of the future was not due simply to the patriotic enthusiasm of the prophet, which could not abandon the hope of a national resurrection; it was based on a deeper conception of God's purpose for mankind, which may be balked for a time, but cannot ultimately fail. How that purpose of redeeming grace should be realized, the prophets did not, could not, know; they were but the heralds of the dawning era,

and died waiting for the redemption of Israel. All they could do was to "prepare the way of the Lord" by generating the consciousness of need, and pointing forward to a redemption based on spiritual renewal.

It was to meet the deeper need of the soul, and to accomplish such redemption—the key to all other blessing—that Jesus Christ lived and died. To bring in everlasting redemption—to regenerate the spiritual life, substituting the heart of flesh for the heart of stone—to bring the clean thing out of the unclean—to lead humanity back through repentance, and forward in faith to abiding and satisfying fellowship with God; this was and still is the work of Christ, as it was and is the supreme work of God in human life.

We view Christ's life in many aspects. We speak of Him as a preacher of righteousness, a controversialist, a philanthropist, a reformer, a healer of diseases; but while these terms touch upon various aspects of His work, they do not reach to the heart and centre of His ministry. The only comprehensive title that embraces all others, and expresses the soul and centre of His mission, is Saviour or Redeemer. This points to the unique aim of His ministry, and gives meaning and permanent value to all else. He came to seek and to save the lost, to found a kingdom of redeemed humanity. Men had wandered from God, and missed the true goal of life; and Christ's essential mission was their reconciliation, their return home to the Father's house, and to the blessedness of the full heritage of life. To awaken in human hearts the sense of the need of reconciliation with God and life: to meet the need thus awakened and win men to the life eternal in God: this was the goal to which all His ministry was directed from first to last.

So far all is admitted. But, strangely enough, many theologians have been led away by their own preconceptions of what salvation or redemption means, and have not even thought of endeavouring, by an historical consideration of Christ's aims and methods, to discover what He meant by it. As thus: redemption presupposes the vindication of God's honour by some deed which has the

value of infinite satisfaction; or, redemption presupposes the full enforcement of the law, and of God's punitive righteousness; or, redemption presupposes at least a perfect repentance. So they have proceeded to dictate the terms on which redemption is possible, and have conceived the essential mission of Christ to be the fulfilment of these conditions, the making of such satisfaction. Yet it is sufficiently evident that, in all the language used by Christ in reference to His mission, there is scarcely a single word that can be construed as a suggestion of such legal relations. And that these theologians are already half-conscious of the vital difference between their own standpoint and the mind of Christ, may be seen in the naïve statement of one of their number that "the chief object" of Christ's mission was not to preach the Gospel, but "that there might be a Gospel to preach."[1] This means that Christ's death is the sole foundation of the Gospel; that Christ's earthly ministry, His teaching and methods of working are of subordinate importance; and that only the hints which Christ threw out as to His saving death have significant value for salvation. Thus the earthly teaching and ministry of Christ are thrown almost out of account; they are not allowed a saving value of their own, or even used to guide us in the interpretation of His saving work and the meaning of His death.

We have good reason to adopt a quite contrary method. Salvation as Christ conceived it was the single comprehensive goal of all His ministry, and all His teaching and work directly contributed to it. It was not for Christ merely a thing of the future, but a matter of present reality. When He proclaimed to the sinner, "Thy sins be forgiven thee": when He said to the tax-gatherer Zaccheus, "To-day is salvation come to this house": why should we eviscerate the meaning of these words, or doubt that Christ was directly bringing salvation to men? We are entitled, nay compelled, to look at Christ's method of saving men if we would know what the new way of salvation really means; and further, we are entitled,

[1] Dale, *Atonement*, p. 46.

when we come to consider later the death of Christ, to view it in the light of the conceptions gained through the study of His preceding gracious ministry.

Let us briefly summarize Christ's mission of salvation and His way of realizing it. His mission clearly arose from the contrast between the lives of men around Him—weak, restless, sinful, discordant—and His own life of blessedness in the fellowship of the Father. By His own uninterrupted converse with God, His undimmed vision of the infinite Goodness, His filial fellowship with the ever-present Father, Christ enjoyed a blessedness and peace which nothing in the world could dissolve. Yet His blessedness was not altogether untroubled, for His communion with God was a communion with God's interest in humanity and God's purpose for humanity. He could not be unmoved by the evils around Him. Standing in a world of sin and sorrow, He felt the evil of the world with all the intensity of His pure and loving character. He made the sin and suffering of men His own; and that, not in any mysterious sense, but simply in the sense that His perfect love and sympathy made Him feel the evils of others as though they were His own, and strive against them as though they were His personal foes. Hence His mission as the Messiah and Saviour of His people—to bring them out of the kingdom of sin and evil into the Kingdom of God, into the life of fellowship which He Himself actualized.

Wherein, then, lay the uniqueness of Christ's mission? It may be said with truth that the purpose and end of every man's life is to realize the Kingdom of God in some particular phase of that infinite ideal. To some men it is given to labour for the upbuilding of the State; to others, to cultivate the soil; to others, to supply the temporal wants of the community in which they live; to others, to labour in the fields of science and promote knowledge; while to all it is given to labour, each in his own place and post, for the furtherance of God's kingdom. But in none of these special tasks lay the work of Christ; He took no part in commerce, or in science; He sought no family ties; He did nothing directly to alter the political

conditions of His country. The work for which He reserved Himself lay in a more central sphere—in the sphere of the religious consciousness. His life-work was concentrated upon one task—to lift men to the heights of His own life; to rid them of their fear and distrust of God; to awaken and quicken their vision of the true ends of life; to give them the knowledge of the eternal Father and that blessedness of communion with Him which is life eternal.

How, then, did Christ proceed to accomplish this saving mission? No doubt He opposed the evil of the world in all its aspects; but His main work was to attack that which lay at the root of the world's evil, the distrust, pride, selfishness and worldliness of the human heart. In attacking this fortress of evil, He sometimes assumed the garb of a prophet, lashing the sins of men around Him with all the moral indignation of a righteous spirit, and denouncing the hypocrisy and irreligion of the leaders of Israel with a fervour unsurpassed by any of Israel's prophets. But that was not Christ's peculiar method, nor was it attended with any more success than when employed by the prophets of old; it had only a preparatory significance at best. Shall we say, then, that Christ's method was that of preaching to men the Divine Fatherly goodness, proclaiming the welcome prepared in God's heart for every repenting prodigal, and illustrating the true life of faith and obedience by His own example? That is true so far as it goes; but it does not adequately cover the facts. So long as we think of Christ merely as a teacher, a prophet of God's righteousness and grace, or an example and pattern, we have not discovered the secret of His power. The true key to the saving power of Christ is to be found, not so much in what He taught or practised, as in what He was—in His amazing Personality.

This is no mere refinement. We all recognize in common life that there is something beyond a man's overt actions, and beyond his express teaching, that impresses us for good or evil. It is the personality of a man that is the measure of his influence, and the standard

by which we come to value his teaching and his doings. As a man is, so is his strength. If this is true in ordinary life, it must be important to recognize it in the case of Christ, whose transcendent personality was never wholly expressed in the words He spake or in the outward course of action He pursued. And the special element in that personality which needs here to be emphasized was His limitless sympathy for others, the gracious condescension with which He charged Himself with all their burdens. We may put it so; Christ did not merely proclaim the grace of God, but He incarnated or actualized it. He did not reveal it as an abstract truth, but realized and presented it to man in His own person. He did not merely preach the forgiveness of sins, or promise it in God's name; He said, Thy sins are forgiven thee, and actually forgave. He came into living touch with the sinner; He made him feel that his soul was precious in God's sight, and gave him a new confidence in himself and in God's gracious mind to him; and thus He made the Divine forgiveness an actual, present, glad reality. This personal contact, which means more than teaching and example, was Christ's real method of saving souls. He realized that His saving power lay in Himself, in His own personality as containing the Divine blessedness to be communicated; and hence His gracious word of invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Apart, then, from the death of Christ, still to be considered, the key to Christ's amazing power over human souls lay in His stainless and loving Personality, through which God manifested Himself in a new way to the world. In the light of His purity, those who were still open to Divine influence felt their unworthiness as they had never before been conscious of it; and in the light of His sympathy they realized that God had come near to them in compassion and mercy. Thus, as it has been said, "The whole ministry of Christ from its beginning to its close was a ministry of reconciliation—a power of Atonement. By what He was, what He said, and what He did, He sought to make God known; to save men from

their false ideas of the Divine character and ways which set human thought and feeling wrong, to expel suspicion and fear from their hearts, and to make them realize that they were His Father's children, and had no right to despise themselves or to despair of themselves. They saw in His compassion the Divine compassion, in His love the revelation and assurance of the Divine love, in His forgiveness the type and promise of the Divine forgiveness." [1]

Before proceeding further, we may here ask what is meant by the forgiveness of sins which Christ communicated. The Divine forgiveness must be interpreted in the light of our human forgiveness. What then, is forgiveness in ordinary human relations? The superficial answer is that it is the refraining from taking vengeance; letting the injury pass unnoticed; not reacting on the injurer, or seeking the enforcement of a penalty. But there is a deeper and truer view of forgiveness. To ignore an injury is not yet to forgive; that implies a restoration of friendly relations, or at least the desire to restore them. And when that desire operates, it may involve something quite different from the ignoring of the injury; it may even include the punishment of the wrong-doer. Forgiveness, conceived as the full restoration of personal relations, is only possible when the wrong-doer comes to such a state of mind as to long for forgiveness; and punishment may have its place in bringing the wrong-doer to a more reflective attitude. The father of an erring child is not unforgiving when he chastises him for his faults; the chastisement may be needed in order that the forgiveness may be realized. The same is true in the wider relations of life. We are commanded to forgive one another, and indeed to exercise a limitless forgiveness; but the exercise of such a spirit does not necessarily preclude us from seeking even by force the repairing of the injury and the punishment of the offender. Forgiveness, in the sense of forgivingness, is an immediate and constant duty; but it may seek its complete realization even through punishment.

[1] John Hunter, *Atonement in Modern Religious Thought.*

In our conception of Divine forgiveness we are entitled to use the same analogies. It is not the mere letting-off, or refraining to punish; it is the restoration to confidence and fellowship, the renewal of the broken personal relationship. The Divine chastisements may still continue even after forgiveness. When David sinned, and repented of his sin, the prophet Nathan announced to him that God had "put away his sin," or pardoned him; but he could not give David the assurance that the chastisement would be entirely done away; the pardon was still accompanied with chastisement. And looking at the facts of life, we are entitled to say that the penalties of sin are never at once removed; perhaps they are never entirely removed. Certainly the traces of sin remain in every man's life; he will not be all that, but for his sin, he might have been; the effects of sin may never be quite undone. Accordingly the Divine forgiveness must be sought somewhere else; not in the removal of all evil consequences, in the dissolution of the tie that binds suffering with sin, but in the renewal of God's favour, and in the personal renewal of heart and life in which that favour is realized and sealed.

We are entitled to hold by the same analogy when we deal with the question of the conditions of forgiveness. We know that in a genuine human forgiveness there are no conditions required by him who grants it. By its very nature forgiveness is full and overflowing, sovereign and free—not in the sense that it is arbitrary, or that it goes beyond ethical requirement, but in the sense that it surpasses all deserving in its object, and that it does not even wait for signs of deserving. The man who says, "I shall wait till my offending brother repents and has the grace to ask my forgiveness," does not know what true forgiveness is, and stands himself in need of pardon; for it is his bounden duty to endeavour to bring his brother to a better mind, and so to make forgiveness a realized fact in his brother's experience. On the other hand, it is true that while one can start a quarrel, it takes two to end it. Forgiveness is completely actualized only when two souls meet and are reconciled; the one embracing

the other in fullest sympathy, glad and radiant at the recovery of a lost friend ; the other penitent and deep-abased, but glad too that the wrong is forgiven and forgotten.

The same holds good in our relation to God. There are no conditions of forgiveness on God's side ; His forgiving mercy is eternal. Christ would not have taught us to pray, " Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," unless He had meant that God perfectly realizes in His own character what men realize imperfectly in their relations to one another. It is true that Christ had to wait till certain conditions were realized in those who had sinned before pronouncing the Divine forgiveness as an actualized fact. It was when He saw the signs of penitence and faith—faith in Himself and therewith in God—that He hastened to rid the sinful one of his doubts and fears, and bring home to his heart the joy of assurance in the words, " Thy sins are forgiven thee." But this is not the whole truth ; for Christ did more than wait for these conditions to be realized. It was His mission to realize them. By the holiness and love that shone forth from His personality, no less than by His teaching, He produced penitence and attracted faith, and so brought men to the point where the Divine forgiveness could be translated into experience.

Here, then, we find a saving work carried on by Christ throughout His entire ministry. And as we proceed to consider the wider significance of Christ's death, we must carry with us the principles that have come before us in His ministering life, and must read the cross in the light of the life of Him who was crucified. Any other method seems condemned from the very start. To say that this reconciling service which Christ rendered throughout His life was no saving work at all, that it was a mere preliminary to salvation, and that it throws no sufficient light on the significance of Christ's death, is simply to throw away the key to the problem which has perplexed the Christian world throughout the centuries.

CHAPTER XX

THE REDEEMING DEATH OF CHRIST

We shall not attempt to set forth in detail the historical circumstances that led to the death of Christ. We have already stated what seems necessary as to the hostility of the Jewish leaders which finally culminated in the tragedy of the crucifixion; and we have now to show how the tragedy was converted into a victory for the Kingdom of God, and has become a new power of God unto salvation.

We start from the fact that the Saviour accepted the cross, when it became inevitable as the price of His loyalty to God's work, not only with submission to the Divine will, but with the indomitable faith that the ends of His mission would be thereby more effectually secured. The few words which He let fall to His disciples are significant indications for our guidance. They show that Christ included His submission to the cross as part of His ministering service; that He regarded it, for Himself personally, as His crowning service, and for the world as His crowning achievement. Here, as always, the end He had in view was the redemption of men from sin and unbelief, their restoration from sin's power to the fellowship and peace of God. We have now to see how the cross of Christ has actually availed to the end He had in view, and why we are entitled to regard it as the crowning achievement of Him who came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

As the significance of Christ's life lay in its moral and spiritual power, the method we have adopted of approaching the problem of His death leads us to look for what it may yield of added significance in the same aspects.

Here we may distinguish between the moral and the religious efficacy of the cross, and shall consider first, its value as inspiring men in their moral ideals and their relations to their fellow-men, and thereafter, its value in a deeper aspect, as transforming man's relations to God.

(A) Its Moral Value

From the beginning of the Church to the present day men have recognized the virtue of the Cross as a supremely powerful moral dynamic in human life. We may take the words of Anselm as our starting-point. "Who can say how necessary and how wisely ordered it was that He, who was to redeem men and lead them back by His teaching from the path of death and destruction to the path of eternal life and blessedness, should spend His life among men, and that by His very course of life, while teaching them by word how they ought to live, He should Himself give them an example? And how could He give Himself as an example to weak and dying men, that they should not draw back from righteousness on account of injuries or insults or pains or death itself, unless they saw that He Himself had experience of these things?" "Do you not perceive that, when He bore with gentle patience the insults put upon Him, violence and even crucifixion among thieves, that He might preserve His righteousness untarnished, He thus set men an example that they should never turn aside from their duty to God on account of personal sacrifice? But how could He have done this, had He, as was possible, avoided the death brought upon Him by His righteousness?" [1]

What Anselm here alludes to incidentally deserves a more extended consideration. It is not difficult to show how the Cross has done more than any other single revelation of Christ throughout His ministry to inspire men with patience in the presence of evil, unflinching devotion to life's highest ideals, and world-defying courage.

(1) The Cross is a marvellous expression of the patient bearing of suffering, and thus appeals with supreme power to all who labour and suffer. We do not need to measure

[1] *Cur Deus Homo*, Bk. II, ch. xi.

the physical weakness and pain, or even the mental anguish that wrung His soul as He thought of the sin that had brought Him to the cross. It was not the suffering, but His bearing of the suffering with the calmness of Divine patience, that has moral significance. It is through this "Symbol of Grief Divinely borne" that Christ has attracted the sufferers of humanity, and toned up the fibres of their courage and patience in the bearing of life's ills.[1]

Too often men enter into the "Sanctuary of Sorrow" either with the trembling apprehension of fear, or else with the grim attitude of the stoic who defies his fate. Weak men tremble and bewail their evil case, and are often reduced to hopeless despair. Men cast in tougher mould act like Carlyle's hero, who meets evil with indignation and grim defiance. "Death? Well, death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and man may, will, or can do against thee? Hast thou not a heart? canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and as a child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet it, and defy it!"[2] But a nobler moral attitude appears in the calm patience and dignity of Christ as He hangs on the cross. There is no evidence of weak pusillanimity, on the one hand; but neither does he trample upon His natural human feelings, on the other. He transcends both attitudes by His triumphant moral faith; He accepts His sufferings as the ordinance of God, believing that they have a Divine meaning and are serving Divine ends. And thus to all faint and despairing souls the Cross of Christ brings a message of hope, and the inspiration of a patience that can inwardly triumph over all loss and suffering and death.

(2) But we cannot well separate Christ's sufferings from the cause for which He suffered and died. And without passing yet beyond the moral point of view, we may say that the cause for which He died was the cause of humanity. It was because He came to serve others that He was brought to death. Viewed in this light, the

[1] Cf. Martineau, *Hours of Thought*, Vol. II, p. 125.
[2] *Sartor Resartus*, ch. vii.

Cross constitutes the most powerful appeal to men to turn from their narrow and selfish lives to the nobler life of service and self-sacrifice. It was love to men that impelled Christ to enter on His mission; and that love reveals itself at its highest on the Cross, where it reaches the supremest act of devotion. And as we take into account the circumstances of Christ's death—the indifference, bigotry, and self-interest of His persecutors as contrasted with the purity and self-sacrificing love of the Crucified, the more morally impressive becomes the scene. Love your enemies, Christ had taught; but the saying acquires new significance and power when we contemplate the scene in which it was perfectly illustrated, where Christ laid down His life for the sake of a world that despised Him and put Him to death.

(3) Closely conjoined to this is the appeal which the Cross makes to those who have ideals, to cleave to them in spite of all opposition, misunderstanding, and death itself. It is a general law pervading human life—and Christ's life is a prolonged illustration of it—that goodness and truth win their way in the world through opposition, conflict and suffering. The prophet who will undertake to preach God's truth as he sees it, and makes no compromise, must expect the opposition and hatred of those who act on different principles, and must steel his heart to take all risks. The heroes in the battle of life are always appointed to posts of special danger, and must be prepared for death. And Christ's faithfulness unto death is a powerful appeal to men to be faithful to their own high ideals, and to suffer all things, if need be, for righteousness' sake.

It is true, men whose aims are low and earthly may find in Christ's Cross a stumbling-block to their enthusiasm, rather than a new inspiration. For does it not point to the path of righteousness as a path of conflict and suffering, and will it not act therefore rather as a deterrent than as an encouragement? Yet most men have something of the heroic in them; and one would fain believe that all men may, at times at least, be stirred to the depths of their being by seeing others faithful to a seemingly

lost cause. When in the darkest hour of Italy's need, Garibaldi called for volunteers to aid in the liberation of his country, he made no secret that he was wanting men who were willing to share with him privation and wounds and the imminent prospect of death. Yet men flocked to his standard, and braved the prospect. They knew their leader called them to no perils but what he meant to share with them; and they entered with noble enthusiasm into the enterprise. And similarly those who have heard the voices that call to a nobler life, and have learned to give heed to them, will not be deterred by the sight of the cross that lies before them; they will be nerved to greater zeal and more self-denying devotion, and welcome the trials that prove they belong to the heroic brotherhood. In the presence of the summons that comes from Christ's Cross, they would feel it an intolerable disgrace to weaken their efforts or be disloyal to their high cause; and when suffering or persecution comes they are sustained by the sense of their fellowship with all suffering heroes and saints. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you . . . for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."

(4) Another aspect of the Cross is seen in the way it can lift men above the judgments of the world. The crucifixion of Christ is the standing instance of a world's bigotry and folly. We see there arrayed on the one side all the authorities of Jerusalem—Jewish leaders, Roman governor, and people, arranging or giving full-voiced consent to a judicial murder; and on the other hand, Jesus with His message of love and truth, fronting them alone. The contrast can scarcely fail to burn into our minds this truth—that the world's judgment is no standard of worth, nor the opinion of the multitude any guarantee that we are in the right. There is surely a power in Christ's Cross, and in the stand He made, solitary and alone, for truth and goodness, that is well fitted to inspire men to resist the all-pervading influence of fashion and popular opinion, and to have the moral grit to follow their own conscience of right, if not with the world's approval, then in spite of the world.

Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound, nor doubt Him, nor deny;
Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

(5) Finally, we note the persuasive power that has accrued to Christ's teaching by the fact that He died, as He had lived, "to bear witness unto the truth." Proving as it did the absolute seriousness and conviction of the Teacher, the Cross has given a power to His doctrine such as no amount of argument or persuasive eloquence could have won for it. The appeal here is not merely to the intellectual mind; the theorist can always object that a conviction is not proved to be true by the fact that some one has died for it, since men have sometimes died for mistaken convictions. Even if we allow this argument, we might maintain that any conviction of truth that is backed by such a guarantee has a special claim on our attention, and deserves to be considered with the utmost earnestness. But the heart sees further than the calculating intellect, and insists that when one is willing to die for his conviction, that conviction is no mere illusion, but is substantially true. The heart of man responds instinctively to the convictions of those who are willing to seal their testimony with their blood; and Christ's teaching has a more solemn significance and a more incisive authority because Calvary lies in the background. Had there been only wood, hay or stubble in Christ's teaching, it would have been reduced to ashes and nothingness in the fiery trials He underwent; and the fact that He remained steadfast and immovable in faith, places His witness in a new light, and clothes it with a new power. His words come to men with a diviner appeal because they express the conviction of one whose love and loyalty to truth were deeper than hell and stronger than death. And he who is of the truth will be all the more constrained to give heed to His voice.

There is no need to gather further indications of the power of the Cross in this moral sphere. In general, one may say that the death of Christ constituted the final test of His moral Personality, and in passing through

it unscathed and triumphant, He has opened to men new springs of moral inspiration. The Cross has entered into the moral manhood of the world; it has put a seal on His teaching which will endure; it has set before men the highest example of love and unselfish devotion to the cause of humanity, and has thus been fruitful of world-defying and death-defying heroisms.

(B) Its Religious Value—Negatively Stated

But Christ's death has a deeper significance than that of a moral dynamic; indeed one may doubt whether its moral power would have been so universal and compelling had it not a deeper meaning for the religious life of the world. In seeking to estimate this deeper value of the Cross, and its place in the redemptive ministry of Christ, we may deal first with the negative aspect of Christ's death as liberating men from false fears and misapprehensions in their relation to God, and then with the positive value of that death as leading men to true fellowship with God and membership in God's Kingdom.

The barriers which stand in the way of a higher type of religious life do not lie merely in man's imperfection and sin, or in the suffering which follows as a natural consequence; they are largely produced by an attitude of mind which is generated in the religious life itself. As we have already seen, all moral religions assume at first a nomistic form, in which God is regarded as the Law-giver and impartial Judge, whose blessing and whose curse are dependent on man's obedience or disobedience. It is never without a struggle that any religion yields up its place to another; and the higher type of religion often finds its bitterest foe in that which it is destined to replace. This is so generally true that one may doubt whether the lower religion is to be regarded as a stepping-stone to the higher, or as a veritable stumbling-block in its path. In some sense, doubtless, it is both. The good is often the enemy of the better; and the problem of religion is oftentimes to get rid of past one-sided and inadequate solutions.

This was true, at least, of the religion of Christ. Its

most persistent foe at the beginning was the legal religion of Judaism. It would not be entirely just to the forces that opposed the Gospel message of Jesus to declare that they were rooted merely in self-interest, unreasoning prejudice, and hatred of goodness. The conflict that raged around Christ's mission was no sheer case of malice and wickedness ranged against purity and unselfish devotion. It was also a case of two religions coming face to face—the nomistic religion of the Scribes and Pharisees coming in conflict with a new religious spirit beyond its comprehension. And for the historical understanding of the significance of Christ's death, it is important that we should view it in the light of this opposition between the religion of law and the religion of grace. For we have no reason to suppose that the nomistic attitude is confined to Judaism, or the religions of the past; it is active in the moral and religious life of all times. And when we consider Paul's teaching as to the law, and Christ's death as liberating us from the curse of it, we find that he is not merely dealing with a passing phase of truth, but with a fact of permanent significance.

As Paul himself indicates, the Jewish law is the representative of all forms of legal or nomistic religion; and so the interpretation of Christ's death, as marking the end of Judaism for the Christian community, reveals the Christian attitude to legalism generally. We do not need to think here of the nomistic religions of the past to discover this wider significance. It is true of man universally that when conscience is first awakened and the moral ideal is identified with the will and commandment of God, he must pass through the law-stage of thought to the higher plane of the Gospel. For there are two stages of moral-religious growth. The commandment under which we live is at first realized as an external law; and even when we begin to recognize that the law has a purpose of good for us, our obedience continues to be largely of the legal sort, prompted by hope of reward, and still more by fear of punishment. And thus, as conscientious men, we pass inevitably through the same experi-

ence as Paul has described in Romans vii. 7–25. We feel ourselves subject to a law which requires an infinite obedience, and know that we have come far short of the ideal. The burden of our sin increases upon us, and our growth in conscientiousness is also a growth in the miserable feeling of our sin and guilt before God. And the only hope of deliverance lies, not in any increase of our own righteousness—for the more we strive the more keenly we must feel our moral failure—but in a new religious faith which shall set us in a new relationship to God, and so deliver us from our mistrust and fear.

That Christ has come to deliver us from this bondage to the law, and to lead us from the legal relation to God into a new relationship of sonship—this is the ground truth on which most of the later theories of Atonement have been founded. It is, however, one of the amazing and regrettable things in the history of the Church's faith that the deliverance from legalism has been interpreted in legalist terms. It has been widely held that the freedom from the law's bondage effected on the Cross was accomplished legally; that Christ satisfied the law's demands, bearing its curse in our stead, so that we can now in faith step forth from the law's dominion and enter as children into God's fellowship. Salvation is thus explained in terms proper to the old nomistic religion. We are asked to believe that the law of God with its threatening and curse is eternally valid, but that, when we come before God for judgment, we have an Advocate with the Lawgiver, and so can win our discharge.

We have already criticized this legalist interpretation of Christ's work in its various forms, and shall only here add that on these nomistic lines no redemption is possible, because no filial relation to God can be gained. If God's relation to us is eternally a relation of law, we might conceivably imagine we had discovered a way of escape from punishment—though the method of escape indicated reminds one of the method of a clever advocate who gets the criminal off by defeating the law on its own ground; but we can appeal with confidence to the conscience of mankind to testify that on such terms God's condemna-

tion still rests on every sinner. He may indeed escape the penalty by a miraculous substitution; but so long as God's relation to him is measured by law, he cannot escape the sense of God's abiding condemnation. Whether enforced or not, the law will stand eternally: "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." The lightning may be diverted; but so long as the legal relation is upheld, so long will the curse remain as part of God's eternal mind towards him; and his redemption is, at best, but half secured.

We are obliged to read the Gospel conveyed by Christ's life and death in a different way. We are redeemed from the bondage of the law, because God's mind and will towards us are not ultimately expressed in legalist terms, and because Christ has delivered us from the burden of the legalist attitude to Him. I have endeavoured to show that this was essentially the teaching of Paul, though his argument had mainly in view the legalism of the Jewish religion. But whether Paul's teaching or no, it is in full accordance with our Christian experience, and with the life and death of Christ which have given rise to it. The religion of Christ can never be reduced to the limits of a modified nomistic faith. Christ Himself sets it aside at every point; in His doctrine of God as Father, in His teaching as to the Divine forgiveness, in His own attitude to the sin and sorrow of the world. And in His death no less than in His life we have the same truth impressed on us. There we see the new religion in conflict with the older legalist faith; and the representatives of that older faith subjecting Christ to all the weight of their legal condemnation. In so judging Him, they virtually judged themselves, and unsheathed a sword for the destruction of their own legalist faith. But the Cross has a wider significance; and we are entitled to consider further how it has affected the Christian consciousness of all times. The burden of the law weighs upon us all; the common conscience presents the moral law as a commandment enforced by external authority, combined with sanctions of penalty and retri-

bution. The burden of conscience is thus increased by the sense that we are subject to God's wrath and punishment—an apprehension that adds to the load of our sin and darkens our future prospect. So long as we abide in this attitude to God, there is no salvation possible to us. By the law shall no flesh living be justified; under the law we can only conclude that God's hand is against us, that we lie under His curse and condemnation. What Paul says of the Jewish law is paralleled by the universal moral experience, wherever men regard God supremely as their Lawgiver and Judge. And salvation thus may be expressed in the same negative way,—as the redemption of the life from this legal plane into the higher plane of a new faith and freedom. Just as, in His life and teaching, Christ brought home to the human conscience the truth of the essential Fatherhood of God, and so lifted from the soul the burden of the law and the crushing sense of condemnation, so by His Cross He works on the soul with the same redeeming power. For the Cross is the standing proof—a proof that appeals to the heart of man, because translated into concrete actuality—that God's procedure with reference to man is not governed by the form of legality; that suffering is not His revenge or the indication of His mere retribution; that His purpose is to save, and not to deal with men after their sins and reward them according to their iniquities. Those who enter into the communion of Christ's death, are lifted thereby into the communion of His Spirit, that is, into a fellowship which makes the nomistic attitude to God impossible.

(C) Its Religious Value—Positively Stated

The positive value of Christ's death, as bearing on man's relation to God, rests on the Personality revealed in His Divine life and work. And we shall be the less tempted to arbitrary mythological speculation as to the meaning of the Cross, if we interpret aright, and keep constantly in view, the significance of Christ's earthly ministry.

The aim of Christ's ministry from first to last was the founding of the Kingdom of God in human society, not

merely by means of teaching and preaching, but by virtue of a personality that realized the Kingdom in its essential nature. He was not merely a guide to the highest truth, or an example of righteousness, but a Saviour leading men to God by communicating to them His own life and power. He revealed God, not simply in the sense that He made known the truth about God, but in the sense that He incarnated in His own life what He revealed. He did not simply declare that God was the loving Father, but Himself so realized the filial relation to God that in His presence all other thoughts of the heavenly Father were put to shame. In His personal dealing with sinful souls He struck the hidden chords of a returning trust and love; suffering with and for them, sharing the burden of their sin by His own great-hearted sympathy, He brought home to their minds a new sense of the purity and forgiveness of God, and created the penitence in which the Divine forgiveness was actualized.

If this represents aright the work of Christ throughout His earlier ministry, there is no reason to seek an essentially different meaning in the Cross. As in Christ's life we see the saving work of one who Himself lived in the light of God's fellowship and was occupied in raising others to the same Divine sonship, so in the Cross we can see the same mediating ministry consummated and perfected. For there the Personality of Christ Himself is expressed in the most explicit and signal fashion, and is set up, as upon a pedestal, for the salvation of the world.

Looked at from the point of view of its human background, the Cross of Christ is the most striking manifestation of human sin, of blind prejudice and bigoted hatred of the good; but as seen from within, it is the fullest expression of the mind of Christ, and therefore of God's mind, towards human sin. The Divine earnestness against sin is seen, not in the suffering, but in the sufferer, in the sin-bearing love which was willing to endure all anguish for its remission and removal. The Divine significance of the death lies entirely in the revelation it yields of Christ Himself. It sets the seal on all

His ministry because it is His supreme manifestation; setting forth His purity and holiness as contrasted with the dark background of human sin, and at the same time exhibiting a love that even in death could forgive those who sought no forgiveness.

The measure of that revelation is the measure of the power of the Cross over the hearts of men. The same grace and forgiveness which Christ revealed throughout His ministry are mediated in a supreme way there. Because I find a mediatorial work carried on through all Christ's ministry, I can find that work crowned and perfected on the Cross, where the holy love of God finds highest expression and is sealed with new power of emphasis to the world. It is actually so; in the light of the Cross men have in all ages felt their sins judged, forgiven, and removed. Judged, not in the sense that Christ bore the wrath or punishment of God, but in the sense that the enormity of sin is revealed, and the lengths to which human passion and prejudice may go; forgiven, because it is the suffering and sin-bearing Christ that assures of forgiveness; and removed, because all actualized forgiveness carries with it repentance and renewal of obedience.

In thus actualizing God's mind, and expressing His invincible purpose of grace and love in the midst of the tragedy of human sin, the death of Christ constitutes a true atoning sacrifice; not an atonement presented by man to God, but a Divine Atonement presented to man, sealing and gifting the Divine forgiveness, and awakening the penitent faith in which that forgiveness is realized.

Wherein, then, lay the necessity of Christ's death? The common answer has been that it was necessary to meet the requirements of Divine justice; that it was legally necessary to prepare for the possibility of man's reconciliation by rendering a vicarious satisfaction. The objections to such a view have been already presented; they may be summed up in the words of Augustine: "Was it indeed so that when God the Father was wroth with us, He saw the death of His Son for us and was appeased? Was, then, the Son so far appeased towards

us that He even deigned to die for us; while the Father was still so far wroth, that unless His Son died for us, He would not be appeased? . . . Unless the Father had been already appeased, would He have delivered up His own Son, not sparing Him, for us? . . . But I perceive that the Father loved us also before, not merely before the Son died for us, but before He created the world." [1] It was not to appease the Father, who needed no appeasing, that Christ died; nor was it to satisfy an abstract justice —which is the same thing in legalist terms; but it was ordained by God in order to fulfil His own purpose for the world, and to carry His saving work in Christ to completion. These sufferings were accepted by Christ as a new channel of His redemptive power; they were Divinely permitted and ordered for the complete manifestation of Divine grace and the fuller establishment of the Divine Kingdom in human hearts and lives.

But such an answer is still incomplete; for the question remains: Why should it be necessary for Christ to suffer and die in order to secure this Divine purpose? Might not the same effects have been secured without such a sacrifice? Would not the redeeming power of Christ's life have been sufficient to attain the Divine end?

Some theologians are here content to point to the general law that moral and spiritual progress has always been made at the price of toil and suffering, and that all love's achievements are the fruit of sacrifice. But this is only to generalize the problem without answering it; for we cannot but inquire how such a law of progress is to be harmonized with our faith in a Divine and gracious government of the world.

Without seeking to enter into the general questions of Theodicy, we may point out that the problem of suffering is not intensified, but rather greatly lightened, by the fact of the Cross. In other cases the result of good is only matter of faith; but here the blessed results are apparent in the life of Christendom. In other cases the results achieved have no apparent causal connection with the precedent suffering; but here the very sufferings may

[1] *Trinity*, Book XIII, ch. 11.

be properly said to have contributed to the resultant blessing.

No doubt it would be an exaggeration to say that, if Christ had not died, He would have accomplished little or nothing for human salvation. Looked at historically, Christ's death on the Cross resulted from His failure to win the heart of the Jewish people; and it would surely be a perversion of our moral instincts to believe that if Christ had succeeded in turning His nation to the truth of His Gospel, and had not been crucified, His redeeming work would not have been accomplished.[1] In this light at least, the absolute necessity of Christ's dying on the Cross must be simply denied.

But we may still recognize the relative necessity of Christ's death, as securing ends which could not otherwise have been so effectively and decisively secured. We have only to look back on what has been said of the moral, historical, and positive religious results of the Cross to perceive how the sufferings were relatively necessary as contributing to these results. Thus: while Christ's moral power is not attached exclusively to His Cross, what believer will deny that the power of the Cross transcends in this respect every other incident of His life; and who will deny that all other ministries of Christ gain in power, because we can now set them against the background of Calvary? Again, Christ's power to redeem men from the legalist religion, while it does not rest merely on the fact that He was rejected by the representatives of the Jewish law, has been enhanced by the opposition thus manifested; it will scarcely be denied that this rejection, and its issue in the crucifixion of Christ, was a crisis for the new religion and hastened the separation of the new faith from nomistic elements. And still more; while it is true that the positive blessings of reconciliation and

[1] Cf. Schweizer: *Die Christliche Glaubenslehre*, II, p. 198: "In truth, even apart from the death of Christ, the Christian religion of redemption has already its redeeming and reconciling power. Would Christ not have been a Redeemer if Jerusalem had repented, instead of crucifying Him? Or was His bloody death so necessary, that if the Sanhedrin had failed to bring about His crucifixion, some one else would have had to accomplish it?"

fellowship with God are not to be referred exclusively to any single event in Christ's life, but rather to His Personality as the bearer of the new religion of filial trust and love, yet the Cross stands as the most signal Manifestation of that Personality, and is thus invested with a power unto salvation such as belongs to no other event in the world's history. Viewed in this way, the death of Christ was not merely an historical necessity, but was morally indispensable for the securing of some of the most blessed results of His mission.

CHAPTER XXI

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF REDEMPTION

We may conclude by considering a question which is of some speculative difficulty, and at the same time of utmost practical importance; namely, as to the conditions of realizing the redemption of Christ in the individual experience. On this subject two opposed views have held a wide sway in the Christian Church; the one emphasizing the absolutely unconditional character of God's gift of salvation, while the other emphasizes with equal insistence the conditions that remain to be realized by the human will.

(1) Some of the profoundest thinkers of the Church have concluded, from the very fact of the free and entirely undeserved grace of God in Christ, that man himself can do nothing to secure that grace, but is simply the passive subject of the Divine saving, justifying, converting and sanctifying activity. This is the pure Augustinian position; and it is the early doctrine of the Lutheran and Calvinist Churches, which took Augustine as their guide and master.

Man can do nothing towards his own salvation, according to Augustine; indeed he can do less than nothing, being dead in trespasses and sins. He cannot have faith; he cannot repent; he cannot work out his salvation. God must take the matter in hand, and carry out His own work of grace in the heart of His elect. The power of God's grace works alone, and it works with irresistible force for man's conversion. Man is saved simply when God chooses, calls, justifies and sanctifies him; and he has no atom of initiative in the process. It is God's prevenient grace which awakens faith and

penitence ; it is God's co-operating grace which guides the believer all through his advancing Christian life, giving him the spirit of obedience and making him persevere in righteousness. This doctrine is crowned by Augustine's doctrine of absolute predestination, according to which God has from all eternity chosen some to be partakers of everlasting blessedness, and left others to their own destruction.

A similar doctrine was taught by the leaders of the Reformation. The sovereign election and grace of God in Christ form the sole and sufficient causality in man's salvation, which is in no wise of man's own doing. The Lutheran doctrine that man is no better than a log or a stone in the matter of his own salvation, is set forth in precise theological terms by Calvin. " God vouchsafes of His mere gratuitous goodness to embrace sinful man, in whom He sees nothing to move Him to mercy, but only his misery ; because He sees him altogether naked and destitute of goodness. Finding solely in Himself the ground of doing man good, He moves the sinner by a sense of His goodness, so that distrusting his own works, he casts the entire work of his salvation upon God's mercy. This is the sense of faith, by which the sinner comes into possession of his salvation, when, according to the Gospel teaching, he perceives that he is reconciled to God ; when by the intervention of Christ's righteousness he obtains the forgiveness of sins and is justified. And, though he is renewed by the Spirit of God, he regards his continuance in righteousness as depending, not on the good works to which he applies himself, but solely on the righteousness treasured up for him in Christ."[1] This account is expressly opposed by Calvin to the unthinking opinion of the multitude who " imagine a righteousness compounded of faith and works " ; he insists that human salvation is solely and entirely of God's grace, and that man can neither operate nor co-operate toward it.

It is in the light of their denial of human merit and of any legal standing before God that we must interpret the Reformers' doctrine of Justification by Faith, and by faith alone. The original meaning of that doctrine as taught

[1] *Institutes*, III, chap. xi, par. 16.

by Luther and Calvin, as by the Apostle Paul, was that the ground of salvation is not to be sought in any legal work of man, in anything he may do to deserve the Divine grace ; but that it must be sought in the mercy of God in Christ, the assurance of which comes through faith. What the Reformers meant to emphasize was the unconditional and wholly undeserved grace of God, which comes to us " without money and without price " through the causality of Christ's work (*propter Christum*), and is realized through faith (*per fidem*). The negative side of the doctrine is the denial of all meritorious or legal works on man's part, and the corresponding affirmation is God's sovereign good-will to us in Christ, of which our faith gives us the assurance. The Reformers themselves warn against misunderstanding. " If faith justified of itself, by some intrinsic virtue, then the forgiveness gained would only be a partial forgiveness, since faith is always feeble and imperfect ; and so our justification would only be a morsel of salvation. We have no such imagination ; but we declare that—properly speaking—God alone justifies. Then we transfer this same quality to Christ, because He has been given to us for righteousness. But we compare faith to a kind of vessel, for we cannot receive Christ unless we are emptied and come with open soul to receive His grace."[1] So Calvin speaks ; and Melanchthon expresses the same meaning when he says : " If justification is attributed to faith, it is attributed to the mercy of God, and not to human efforts, or human works, or human worthiness." Faith, then, is not the condition or material cause of God's grace ; it is not the pre-requisite of salvation, or what makes us worthy to receive it ; but it is the instrument or the channel through which God's grace is assured to us. Man can never be assured of God's gracious relation to him on any ground of his own righteousness, or repentance, or even of his own believing. It is only when he looks away from himself, and ceases to search out the conditions of worthiness in himself, and when he throws himself in trust upon the pure mercy of God as revealed

[1] Calvin's *Institutes*, Bk. III, ch. ii, par. 7.

in Christ, that God comes to him with the assurance of pardon and releases within him the springs of the new life.

In so far as the Reformation-doctrine of justification by faith is set in opposition to the doctrine of meritorious works, the position of the Reformers is irrefragable, and remains as the standing principle of all evangelical Protestant Churches. But even from the beginning one can detect the influence of another doctrine, namely, that man is quite passive in the work of his salvation. Faith was set in opposition not merely to legal or meritorious good works, but to all good works. No doubt it was constantly affirmed that faith was the spring and cause of repentance and good works, and not separable from these; and Calvin was still careful enough to point out that faith was only logically prior to repentance, and not actually antecedent to it in time.[1] This distinction between faith and repentance did not really safeguard the Church from falling back into the old conception of human merit; for it is just as easy to attach merit to faith as to attach it to repentance. In order to make the distinction clear, the scholastic theology of the seventeenth century was obliged to treat faith, not as the turning of heart and life Godward—for that would confound it with repentance or conversion, which is the later product of faith—but rather as the believing or accepting the truths of the Gospel, that is, the truth of the Protestant creed. Indeed, if every element of repentance is excluded from the definition of faith, what remains but a believing? While the theologians themselves kept clear of such a conclusion, they led by their distinctions to a widespread view that believing is of more account than doing, and that man is saved by the hearty acceptance of Christian doctrine, in other words, by his orthodoxy.[2] Further,

[1] *Institutes*, Bk. III, ch. iii, par. 2.

[2] It is only in reference to this later perversion of the doctrine of justification by faith that Mozley's criticism is warranted, when he says: "The Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, formally and literally stated, is so inconsistent with the first principles of common sense and natural religion that in this shape no human being can possibly believe it. It requires us to believe that that which makes a man pleasing to God, or justifies him, has nothing to do with morality or goodness in him; and being moral creatures we cannot believe this."

this distinction between faith and repentance had other regrettable consequences for later theology. It set the example, and gave an impulse to the later mania for making logical distinctions in which the process of the growing Christian life was dissected and carved out of all recognition. Different aspects of the one concrete experience came to be treated as separate entities, and referred to separate operations of the Divine grace; faith to God's justifying grace, repentance to His regenerating and converting grace, adoption to His adopting grace, and righteousness of life to His sanctifying grace. Such logical distinctions might appear at first as harmless essays of the scholastic mind to make spiritual truth picturable; but in reality they were positively injurious, in so far as they sundered the living totality of God's saving grace, and substituted abstractions for concrete experience.

It was Albrecht Ritschl especially who brought evangelical thought back from the confusion of such verbal distinctions and logic-chopping abstractions to the simplicity of concrete Christian experience. God's justifying or forgiving grace, His regenerating grace, His adopting grace, His sanctifying grace—these represent different aspects of the one grace of God which operates in the human soul; and faith, penitence, conversion and righteousness of life are all at bottom one reality, denoting the totality of the Christian life in its various essential

This criticism is justified precisely in the same way as the Epistle of James is justified, namely, as the repudiation of a perversion of Pauline doctrine. That is to say, it is substantially justified if faith is taken to mean simply a belief in doctrine. But it is pointless as a criticism of the Evangelical doctrine of the Reformation when taken in its original meaning. For the Reformers protested against taking faith as a "causa fiendi" of salvation, as something that "makes us pleasing to God" and worthy of God's justifying grace; they rather insist that faith is the channel of God's grace, and the first outpouring of that grace (not "causa fiendi," but "causa essendi"). The criticism of Ménégoz is more to the point; for he can distinguish between the original doctrine of justifying faith and the later perversion of it. His thesis that we are "justified by faith, independently of our beliefs," is directed expressly against the popular misapprehension of the original doctrine. As he points out, faith in its proper meaning is the movement of the heart Godward, and includes repentance. "Repentance and faith are identical movements considered from two different points of view; repentance considers the heart's movement as a turning away from sin, faith as our approach to God" (*Le Fidéisme*, p. 25).

aspects. In thus presenting the facts, we are simply returning to the human analogies, which have too often been lost to view. In sober truth, we all recognize that the father of the prodigal child does not first justify or forgive, then infuse penitence, then re-adopt into his family, and so on. What is, indeed, the forgiveness of the father but just the home-welcome; and what does that mean but re-adoption into the family? Take forgiveness to be the removal of the bars to fellowship; what, then, is adoption but the same thing on its positive side, the renewal of that fellowship by the father; and how could either of these be realized by the erring son unless through his returning home, that is, repenting of his past? And as God's grace is one, so the return of the prodigal represents repentance, conversion, regeneration, and moral renewal, which are all included in the one word—Faith. For Paul and Luther, and for Calvin too in the main, faith is no limited factor of the Christian life, but its fundamental aspect. It is the filial attitude of the soul to God, and filial fellowship with Him; it is the Christian life itself in the main aspect of its relation to God. And being the ground-form of the Christian life, it is all-inclusive. It exists in and through its various manifestations—call these repentance, conversion, new life, obedience, or what you will. When we take faith in this sense, we can appreciate the evangelical doctrine which singles it out as the supreme channel of God's saving grace; for it is simply the characteristic Christian attitude, which refuses to stand in legal relations with God, and recognizes that, whatever good may be done, our reliance for salvation must rest on the infinite undeserved grace of the Father-God.[1]

[1] This view of faith, as denoting our ground-attitude to God, and as including all the elements of Christian life, is well expressed by Alexander Vinet. "The water that springs up into everlasting life is like a river; and it may change its name in its course, as a river often changes its name. Now it is repentance, now conversion, now sanctification; all these names distinguish the places and times of the same fact; sanctification is already in repentance, and sanctification is a conversion that perpetuates itself; conversion is a sanctification begun; and faith, according to the idea we have given of it, encloses all the elements of the Christian life." "What does faith include?

(2) So far we have been considering the Augustinian view of God's sovereign grace and the central position of faith as the supreme operation of that grace. This view seems to be justified in maintaining the principle that God's grace is pure and free, and so far as God Himself is concerned, entirely unconditional. But the other principle, which has been almost invariably conjoined with it, that man can do nothing towards his own salvation, that he is simply a passive subject in God's hands, is an exaggeration which has only been accepted with reservations, and indeed has encountered a strong opposition throughout the centuries.

The general position adopted by opponents of the doctrine of man's passivity has taken the form of a Semi-Pelagian or Synergist doctrine, namely, that God and man co-operate in the work of salvation. Salvation is in part God's work, in part man's work; for man has to do his part in order to deserve the Divine blessings of pardon and eternal life. The work of God and the work of man are, so to speak, dovetailed into one another; and the differences of view as to the amount of human co-operation do not alter the fundamental thought. Side by side with the grace of God or the merit of Christ stands some factor of human merit, some work of repentance or righteousness, whereby man makes himself deserving of the grace of God. It is true, even the Semi-Pelagian thought of the Middle Ages strove to minimize the idea of human deserving by distinguishing between legal merit in the full sense (*meritum ex condigno*) and those human works which were not absolutely meritorious, but might fairly claim consideration (*merita ex congruo*); but even this distinction did not radically change the doctrine that man must contribute something of his own towards deserving his salvation. It is indeed

What does it mean if not the complete renunciation of our pretensions, the acknowledgment of our state of guilt and condemnation, the confession of our inability to save ourselves, the solemn abdication of our merits, an entire resignation of ourselves to the true author of our salvation; in a word, God put into His own place, and we into ours; God on the throne, and we in the dust?" (*Vital Christianity*, pp. 250, 257).

difficult to see how the conception of human merit could be avoided on the assumed premises. If man has to do something of his own—something in which God has no part—towards his salvation, then we must conclude that man's salvation is not entirely of God's grace, and man must rely on himself to some extent, and to that extent must be his own saviour. Nay more; if we hold to the conception of a literal co-operation of Divine grace with human working, and regard these as distinct factors, we are almost inevitably led to the conclusion that the Divine grace operates only in the way of providing the external conditions of salvation, and that the innermost process is dependent on man alone; or, in other words, that God's grace provides the possibility of man's salvation, and that the actual realization is essentially man's own doing, and earned by his own merit.

But if this legal-moral standpoint is unsatisfactory, must we return to the only alternative which past theology offers, and declare that man is purely passive in the work of his salvation? Such a return is to-day simply impossible, if we consider the concrete religious experience and the moral processes involved. However much we exalt the working of Divine grace and its power in human life, we cannot ignore the fact that man is a moral being, and that faith, repentance, and goodness are in some sense the issue of his personal endeavour.[1] May we not recognize that the religious standpoint, which repudiates

[1] Cf. Caird: "No moral and spiritual good can ever be conveyed to us passively. In the very passivity of the receiver, so to speak, an element of activity must be present. Material blessings can be conferred on a being who remains as inert as the vessel into which water is poured, or the coffer into which money is deposited. But a spiritual blessing can only be spiritually received. The intelligence must apprehend it, the conscience must recognize and appreciate it, the will and active energies of the soul must go forth to grasp and appropriate it. And in an especial manner would this be true of that highest and most precious of all spiritual blessings, the salvation that comes to us through the redemption that is in Christ. The faith that makes us participants in His perfect righteousness and His atoning sacrifice and death, so far from being an attitude of mind inert, unintelligent, passive, is one of the most intense moral activity; so far from being destitute of moral value and significance, it may be said to be the principle of all moral excellence, in which all goodness is virtually contained" (*Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, Vol. II, pp. 77, 229).

the legal conception of merit, and the moral standpoint which repudiates the notion of man's passivity, are equally justifiable, and reconcilable from some higher point of view?

(3) Modern theology is striving to mediate between the opposed standpoints; and, while retaining intact the religious view of God's grace as the source of all faith and goodness, is seeking to make room for the moral view of man's personal responsibility in working out his own salvation. It seems to be in a fair way to achieve this by revising the radical conception of God's activity which underlay both the older theories. The Augustinian and Pelagian theories were alike based on a conception of God which separated Him from human activity, and represented His grace as coming into human life in the form of an external intervening power. In the one view, God's grace comes with irresistible power into our life and carries on a work of salvation in us of which we are only the passive instruments. In the other view, that grace intervenes similarly as a power from without, but one that may be resisted, and one with which we must co-operate for salvation. But we have learned to ask the previous question, whether God's activity is adequately conceived in this fashion. We no longer think of God as intervening in the world merely on extraordinary occasions, and for extraordinary purposes; the immanent point of view is as vital as the transcendent. The Infinite Being transcends the finite, but also includes the finite, and that without destroying the finite's self-activity. God is in the world, and His omnipresent activity is the basis of all the activity of man in its upward movement. The "natural man" of the older theology, who is entirely outside of God, and bereft of all good and possibility of good, is an unnatural fiction. There is no man who has not the working of God's grace within him as well as around him, and everything commendable or good in man may be assigned equally to God and to the man himself.

When we keep this wider conception in mind, the problem concerning man's part in his own salvation can be solved without danger of one-sidedness; and the

various aspects of New Testament teaching are seen to be quite harmonious. If God's activity is not exclusive of man's activity, salvation may be equally conceived as entirely of God's grace, and as realized through the intensest activity on man's part. We can now accept without qualification the thought of the apostle when he says, "Work out your own salvation, for it is God who worketh in you." We can also accept without confusion of thought the teaching of Jesus, when He proclaims that the blessings of the Kingdom are God's free gift to men, and yet equally proclaims that the Kingdom is a treasure which must be bought with all a man has; or again, that no one can enter the Kingdom who has not humility, the spirit of meekness, penitence, and faith, and a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees. In these sayings, Christ expresses a double truth, which confounds the mere logician, but harmonizes well with Christian experience: on the one hand, the unconditional Divine grace; on the other, the stringent conditions required of those who would enter the Kingdom, or maintain their place in it. These two points of view are perfectly harmonizable, if once we recognize that the way *into* God's Kingdom is the same thing as the way *in* that Kingdom, and that the gracious activity of God works in and through all our human endeavours.

Let us expand this dual conception of salvation, as God's work, and as man's work. In the first place, looking at salvation as the gift of God's grace, we naturally consider it as mediated by Him in whom that grace is supremely concentrated. If we accept what has been said of the saving power of Christ's Gospel and life, and of the death on the cross in which that Gospel and life stand permanently incarnated, we shall see, in this great gift of Christ to humanity, the Divine channel of the saving blessings which have come to His followers. The Spirit of God works there, using that life and death as the medium of our salvation; the power of God works there, evoking our faith and loyalty, and pouring in through these channels the Divine gifts of forgiveness, enlighten-

ment, and moral strength. It is not implied here that the Divine Spirit works nowhere else than in and through Christ; for salvation has many degrees of power and elevation, and God's gifts are really universal. But in Jesus these saving forces are gathered into a focus of light and power as nowhere else, creating in the believer deeper roots of faith and penitence, and so consummating the blessing of salvation. They touch mind, heart and will, and meet the entire spiritual need; they bring forgiveness to our sin, light to our darkness, strength to our weakness, hope to our despair; and thus lift us from the depths of sin and evil into the life of the sons of God. And all these blessings are possible, and are increasingly realized, just in so far as the Spirit of Christ impresses its power on the world. It is true, salvation may come to individuals indirectly, as through the Church, or through the power transmitted by the lives of Christ's followers. But the abiding source of saving grace lies in Christ Himself; and the Church continues to be the channel of saving power just in so far as it returns to the source, and can steep itself anew in the life and spirit of its Head.

But in the second place, it is no less true that salvation is man's own achievement, and that God's work in us is also our own work within ourselves. The acceptance of a new spiritual life can be no mere passive acceptance; to imagine this possible is simply to be misled by a material metaphor. The acceptance of Christ's Spirit—in which all Divine blessings are contained—means the exercising of that Spirit. The acceptance of the Divine forgiveness, as coming through the channel of Christ's life and Cross, means that we are freely entering into the filial relation to God; as the acceptance of the Divine regenerating power involves our earnest repentance and endeavour to do God's will. It is true that the very acceptance is God's work—the God within us responding to the appeal of God without us; but it is also essentially our work, the upspringing into activity of our best and deepest self. Thus every aspect of the gift of grace has its correlative aspect in our achievement, assimilating, realizing,

working towards the life of the children of God. The distinctions we make in this connection do not point to different facts, but only to different aspects of the same fact. When we think of the religious attitude of the Christian, we call the new upspringing life, faith; when we think of the moral effort involved, we call it conversion; when we think of the change itself, we call it a new birth; or when we think of the past life from which we have turned, we call it repentance. But it is the same new life in different aspects. The most comprehensive aspect, as pointing to what is fundamental and abiding, is faith; always on the understanding that it is taken in its inclusive sense.

> Faith, which is
> Not wisdom, understanding, creed, belief,
> Nor sinlessness—but earnest will to stand
> On Love's side—eager heart to see the Good,
> And serve the Good, and hail the Light, and help
> The spreading of the Light, aiming to grow
> Perfect as He is perfect.

Call this faith, call it the true attitude of the convert, call it life in God, or what you will, the poet sees truly that one includes and involves the others, and that the Christian experience forms an indivisible unity.

If, then, it is asked, what is the order of the Divine operation in human hearts, or the order of the processes by which man enters into the experience of salvation, our answer is simple. Looking at the actual variety of Christian experience, we are entitled to answer that "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one born of the Spirit." To some the new life comes silently like the dew on the parched ground, insensibly touching and renewing; in other cases it comes like the bursting of a volcano. No doubt the working of the Spirit has its laws, just as the wind has its laws; but their complexity defies analysis. We may be satisfied to recognize one great law of its activity: that it works mainly through the impression made by Christ's Personality on human hearts, and, in a less degree through the Christ-like lives of His followers.

APPENDIX

THE TRADITIONAL THEORY OF SACRIFICE

The interpretation of the custom of sacrifice was long obscured by dogmatic reflection which ascribed to primitive man conceptions of the gods belonging to a later stage of development, and insisted on reading moral meanings into the primitive practices. Thus it has been very persistently held that all blood-sacrifices represented a substitution of the victim for the worshipper, and, further, that the victim's pain, suffering and death vicariously satisfied the just wrath of the deity which otherwise would have vented itself on the worshippers themselves. This unhistorical and anachronistic theory has largely lost credence to-day; it has been practically snowed under by the vast accumulation of facts. Even its defenders recognize that many of the sacrificial rites suggest quite different conceptions, that they often express homage, or gratitude, or desire for fellowship. They entrench themselves, however, in one class of offerings—the *piacula*, expiatory offerings, sacrifices for sin—and maintain that these have a unique meaning, and are substitutionary offerings to the Divine justice.

Even in its contracted form the traditional theory finds little support in the known facts. One may notice, to begin with, that the name *piaculum*, expiatory sacrifice, covers many classes of offering which have no reference either to Divine anger or to human sin. If, then, we wish to retain the proper application of the term, we must use it in its original wide sense, as a rite specially fitted to secure men purity or piety —*pietas*, the fitting attitude to the gods. And the same holds in regard to the name "Atonement," or atoning sacrifice, which in its original sense as corresponding to the Hebrew *Kipper* and its cognates, is applicable to all sacrifices that have a moral cathartic meaning. The ritual of the Levitical Day of Atonement, which is designed to "atone" the altar

and the sanctuary and the people, is, as the term implies, a great annual dedicatory and cleansing ceremonial.

Passing from terms to facts, we find that the sacrifices which are named piacular are, at least for the most part, resolvable into one or other of the three classes mentioned in the first chapter—the honorific, sacramental and cathartic. Among the *piacula* were (*a*) such as were offered on entering upon a campaign or at some stated periods of solemn convocation and rededication of the community. No one could suppose that such *piacula* presupposed the divine anger, or were victims of divine wrath; they were either costly gifts pleasing to the god and offered as a bid to secure the divine blessing, or, as the forms of blood-sprinkling occasionally indicate, they were sacramental observances bringing new life and power to the worshippers. (*b*) *Piacula* with special features of ritual were offered to the spirits of the underworld: these were prominently sacramental in character. (*c*) Other piacular sacrifices were offered for breaches of ritual law, which might take place unwittingly or for some reason of urgent necessity, as, e.g., when a farmer decided that he must work on a sacred festival day, and palliated his guilt beforehand by sacrificing a dog. Such offerings seem to be on a par with the guilt-offerings of the Hebrews, which were of the nature of fines; and both clearly belong to the honorific order. Again (*d*) the cathartic ceremonies are often included among *piacula*; not only those sacramental rites which are positively efficacious, and cleanse because they give divine life and renewal, but those specific rites in which the evils are removed by means of a transference ritual. Here there is no thought of a divine judgment, or of an actual offering to divine wrath. The intermediary victim, the scapegoat, is indeed accursed, as laden with the sin of the community; but so far from being offered in sacrifice, it is removed from the midst of the people and hidden from the sight of gods and men.

These instances appear to be fairly representative of the piacular sacrifices of antiquity; and they seem to resolve themselves into honorific or sacramental or cathartic rites. But may there not be another class of sacrifices, to which the name of piacular is even more appropriate, viz., *piacula*, in which the victim is handed over to the god's anger, and so averts wrath from the worshippers? The validity of such a conception is still upheld by Robertson Smith, who seeks to prove it by relating sacrifice to the early forms of judicial execution.

It is interesting to compare Robertson Smith's article on Sacrifice with his later work on the *Religion of the Semites*, and to notice how the instances he first gave of piacular sacrifices, or offerings to satisfy Divine justice, fade away later into honorific or sacramental rites. Thus the sacrifice of Iphigenia, which he first adduced as an instance of an offering to the god's wrath, is later classed among other sacrifices offered at the opening of a campaign and which were nothing more than survivals of the communion sacrifice. So the yearly offering by the Carthaginians of a tribesman's blood, which was first taken as a vicarious expiation, is regarded later as a sacramental rite, denoting the annual cleansing of the nation, and sealing anew the life-bond between the god and his worshippers.[1] But while making large concessions to the more historical point of view, he continues to insist that in some cases at least the piacular sacrifices were intended as offerings to satisfy justice and avert wrath. Individual or private *piacula* might be interpreted as honorific offerings, and even the sacrifice of a child be nothing else than "the greatest and most exorbitant gift a man can offer"; but doubtless "public *piacula* were often regarded as surrogates for the execution of an offender."[2] We look, then, for one or two concrete illustrations of sacrificial vicarious execution; for at least one example among the many that are declared to exist. But we look in vain: Robertson Smith does not furnish us with a single case! But he builds up his failing argument by pointing to certain analogies in the Old Testament—the slaughter of seven members of Saul's household because of that King's harsh treatment of the Gibeonites (2 Sam. xxi. 9), and the ritual used to purge a community from the guilt of an untraced murder (Deut. xxi.). Unfortunately for the argument, the two elements which the author seeks to combine—execution and sacrifice—persist in remaining separate; for the ritual ceremony was not an execution, and the hanging of Saul's sons was an execution but not a sacrifice.

That judicial and even religious executions were common from the earliest times there can be no doubt: the Old Testament is full of examples. The righteous deed of Moses when in time of plague he slew the chiefs of the people for heathenish practices and thus "turned away the fierce anger of Jehovah"[3]; the act of Samuel when he hewed Agag in

[1] *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 384, 389–90.
[2] *Religion of the Semites*, p. 403.
[3] Num. xxv. 4.

pieces before the Lord[1]; the act of the community when they stoned Achan and his family and burned them with fire[2]—these are instances parallel to the hanging of Saul's sons before the Lord, and illustrate the judicial execution, sometimes Divinely ordained, whose purpose is to turn away God's anger by sating vengeance, or satisfying justice. The general custom of *Herem* in Israel, the extermination of the enemies of Jehovah and the destruction of all belonging to them, had a similar significance; it was a wholesale execution expressing the judgment of God upon His foes. But whether Divinely ordained or not, whether the victims are vicariously chosen or not, such executions are judicial acts and *not* sacrifices. They are religious functions, but only in the sense in which all judicial acts are religious functions: they are not sacrificial functions, but separated from these by a clear dividing-line.

The second example adduced by Robertson Smith may appear to furnish the case required to prove his point, and to exemplify the union of execution and vicarious sacrifice. In the Deuteronomic law, when murder has been committed and the author of it cannot be found, the elders of the community are enjoined to purify themselves from the guilt of innocent blood. They are to take a heifer that has never been yoked and bring it down to an uncultivated valley where there is running water. They are then to absolve themselves from all guilt in the matter by breaking the neck of the heifer, washing their hands over it, and solemnly attesting before God their ignorance of the murderer and their personal innocence. Here we have clearly a piece of ritual of the sacrificial order; and R. Smith's argument implies that it is a vicarious execution, and represents scenically the punishment that would have been meted out to the murderer himself had he been discovered. In reality, however, the idea of a vicarious execution has no place in the ritual, which is clearly concerned not with the clearing of the murderer from guilt, but with the purification of the community from his contaminating influence. Every suggestion of the ritual goes to show that it is intended as a catharsis of the community from the infection of the innocent blood shed in their midst.

Such cases being disposed of, it only remains to ask when and how the conception of sacrifice as a scenic presentation of an execution came to be superposed on the original and

[1] 1 Sam. xv. 33. [2] Josh. vii. 25.

radical ideas. The disparity between the thought of a sacrosanct animal pleasing to the deity and that of a victim which is so abhorrent to God that only its execution could give Him pleasure, is apparently very great; and the natural conclusion is that the latter conception could only have gained ground when the entire sacrificial system was crumbling to pieces, and its real meaning was lost to view. Thus we may notice that the sacramental sacrifice of the goat sacred to Dionysus was later interpreted (by Varro, Virgil and others) as the execution of the animal that injured the sacred vine; and that, similarly, the pig which was sacred to Demeter and sacramentally eaten in sacrifice, was later held to be an enemy of the goddess and sacrificed to her because it injured the corn.[1] With this superficial interpretation corresponds the observation of Plutarch that "not what is dear to the god, but what is the opposite, is the proper sacrifice." Such examples seem to indicate that the interpretation of sacrifice as the "scenic representation of an execution" was simply the misinterpretation of a later reflective age. It had no place in the fundamental conceptions of sacrifice, nor can it be shown to have influenced the actual development of the ritual.

[1] Cf. Frazer: *The Golden Bough*, II, 167, 299.

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